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# Stay Out: Why Intervention Should Not Be America's Policy

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan dominate security discourse. With thousands of lives lost and billions of dollars spent, few issues merit more attention. Yet it is worthwhile to remember that these wars, like all wars, will end. And when they do, policy makers will come to terms with a harsh, albeit forgotten, reality: The ruling of distant peoples, as George Kennan so aptly put it, is not “our dish.” The United States should steer clear of “an acceptance of any sort of paternalistic responsibility to anyone, be it in the form of military occupation, if we can possibly avoid it, or for any period longer than is absolutely necessary.”<sup>1</sup> Simply put, intervention might have been our fate, but it should not be our policy.

From a practical perspective, the US experience with intervention has not been a happy one. Guatemala, Iran, Cuba, and Vietnam add up to a bad scorecard, and recent events have continued this negative trend. What is exceptional about America's recent interventions, however, is how well they have camouflaged a fundamental truth about international politics: The greatest dangers in the world stem from the greatest powers, the smallest from the smallest ones. And make no mistake; intervention operations to rid the world of terror are a short-run concern. In the long run, the balance of power among states in the world poses the greatest challenge to US security and, in this regard, the United States is in a precarious position. Large-scale economic changes, together with ongoing wars, have placed the United States in a relatively weaker position with respect to its rivals than it was eight years ago. In economic terms, the costs have been staggering, with estimates as high as \$3 trillion. In military terms, even if the United States were to achieve its war aims, American forces are less capable than they were in 2000.<sup>2</sup> Continual deployments, along with the accompanying wear and tear on personnel and equipment, have left the American military in desperate need of replenishment. As the new administration has made clear, coming to terms with these structural challenges will be demanding.<sup>3</sup> Harder still is trying to find another case that rivals or even approximates the United States' relative decline, the pitch and speed of which appear unusual.

While the decline is real, it is important to stress that the United States remains the most powerful nation in the world, and the choices it makes today will affect it in the future. As recent history illustrates, global change can come quickly and only somewhat predictably. The dramatic end of the Cold War and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union serve as stark reminders of the timing and tempo of international life. The strategic insight of those events should not be lost on policy makers: Great powers rise slowly but can fall quickly. As the United States positions itself for the coming years, it is worth noting that there are potential challengers on the horizon. With the world's largest population and a promising economy, China is the dominant power in Asia. In Europe, it is Germany. Both dwarf regional rivals and have the capacity to dominate them should they ever decide to do so. With respect to its neighbors, India is equally strong, while Russia's power, especially if measured in terms of mega-tonnage, is matched only by the United States. In the world of tomorrow, America might rue the day when it chose to make intervention its most pressing security concern. How the United States responds to pressures to intervene could determine the fate of the nation.

The debate about intervention will continue to be fueled by those who believe liberty and wealth can cure the world's ills. Concerns will also be heard from those who shy away from the use of force unless it is used to right a wrong. It is important to stress that while liberty is preferable to all other options and poverty remains a scourge on the human race, neither fostering liberty nor ending poverty can secure world peace. The facts are these: Democracies have fought many wars, and the wealthier ones tend to fight more than most, which is another way of saying that the history of world politics is primarily a history of inequality. Policy makers would do well to recognize this, lest the United States finds itself intervening to right wrongs in interesting places throughout the world to no avail.

### **Curbing the Demand for Intervention**

Curbing the demand for intervention hinges on several factors, not the least of which is the choices statesmen make regarding international order. In establishing and sustaining international order, great powers have two options. They can dominate rivals, or they can accommodate them. Should a state choose to dominate rivals, making its security contingent on its ability to surpass all others, it will enter into what has historically proven to be a poor game, in which the costs of domination are severe. Should a state choose

to accommodate rivals, making its security is contingent on its ability to balance against others, it will enter into what has proven to be a somewhat less poor game, in which the costs of balancing are less. Statesmen know this in advance, which is why shrewd states seek accommodation.

## **International Order and Failed States**

Few issues threaten international order more so than failed states. That is the central claim of Thomas Barnett's popular book, *The Pentagon's New Map*. Barnett argues that the United States cannot be made safe at the expense of others. In this increasingly interconnected world, "our vulnerability is not defined by the depth of our connectedness with the outside world but by the sheer existence of regions that remain off-grid, beyond the pale, and unconnected to our shared fate."<sup>4</sup> These regions are the same ones where we find failed states. Barnett's answer to the failed-state problem is daring and audacious: serve as bodyguard to the rest of the world. The task is not perpetual war, as some might have it. Rather, the United States is to "serve as globalization's bodyguard wherever and whenever needed throughout the Gap." Due to the enormity of the task and the associated risks if things go poorly, one had better pause and ask why.

That failed states are a reality comes as no surprise. The number of states has been steadily increasing for the past 50 years. In 1958, the United Nations recognized 81 states in the world; by 2008 that number had grown to 192.<sup>5</sup> In economic terms, more firms means more failures—in a competitive world, one should expect nothing less. That states are failing, however, is not the problem. The problem is, failed states are a non-problem getting too much attention. The recent stand-up of the US Africa Command, or AFRICOM, is an indicator that US leaders take Barnett's call to intervention seriously. Established in February of 2008, AFRICOM is designed to solve regional issues before they become more acute, recognizing that "peace and stability on the continent affects not only Africans, but the interests of the United States and the international community as well." It will do this by building partnership capacity and serving as the lead coordinating agency with considerable involvement from the Department of State and other agencies concerned with the future of Africa. As lofty as it sounds, AFRICOM is an unnecessary extension of US power and resources into an area of the world that is, from a security perspective, not terribly important.

What Barnett and the founders of AFRICOM overlook is that some states pose severe security concerns while others do not. Failed states are located far away from the United States. They tend to be poor with scant natural resources and few, if any, powerful friends. Somalia, Sierra Leone, and Sudan are good examples. Since international security is determined by the global distribution of material capabilities, expressed in terms of economic and military power, it stands to reason that those interested in international order ought to concern themselves with states that have the capacity to upset the distribution of material capabilities. And failed states have little chance of doing that. The *2008 Failed States Index* lists 20 states that are critically unstable.<sup>6</sup> Of those, only two, Pakistan and North Korea, pose serious security concerns. The typical failed state has a GDP of \$39 billion, which equates to about 1 percent of Germany's GDP, 10 percent of Norway's, and approximately 50 percent of Myanmar's. If we were to add up all 20 GDPs of the states on the index, the combined GDP would be slightly higher than that of the Netherlands.<sup>7</sup>

Nonetheless, the idea that failed states pose a threat to international order remains durable. In large part, this is due to the popular wisdom that correlates failed states with terrorism. Failed states, the logic goes, are related to terrorism in that they serve as safe havens for terror groups. There is, however, little evidence to support this. In fact, the ideal conditions in which terror groups flourish are found in those states with severe political and religious repression, growing economies, and uneven economic development.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, those states with a declining economy (poor and getting poorer) are the least conducive for harboring terror organizations. In other words, low-income states with growing gross national incomes are nearly four times more likely to support terror organizations than those with declining economies. This is especially so when uneven income distribution accompanies growth. Under such circumstances, the tension between the life people live and the one that they might expect appears stark. Over time, this relative deprivation leads to an increase in frustration, making conditions ripe for terrorist exploitation. This point is worth stressing: poor states with growing national incomes bear watching; those with falling ones do not.<sup>9</sup>

In the case of failed states that have been exploited by terror groups, there are a number of extenuating circumstances to consider. Afghanistan illustrates this point when one considers that the contemporary history of Afghanistan is not a trite history of a failed state that chose to harbor terrorists. It is a complex history involving two great powers that, through

intervention, neglect, or the combination of both, assisted in the ruining of a country and their relations with it. As a result, the Taliban government came to power and got cozy with some bad people for reasons that one may never understand. Other states might be tempted to do the same. But will they? If successful states tend to imitate others, that does not appear likely. Afghanistan is one of the poorest states in the world. With a per capita GDP of \$800, a life expectancy of 42 years, and a mortality rate of 250 per 1,000 live births, it is the brand name for failure. Why would any state want to imitate that?

Moreover, it is hard to imagine how AFRICOM or any international organization could have prevented such failure. States, like firms, succeed and fail; one should not be surprised. That is not to suggest that all failures are the same. While it is true that should some states fail they would pose grave challenges to international order, few, aside from Egypt, are in Africa. A failed Russia, because of its size and resources, immediately comes to mind. Pakistan and North Korea would also pose immense challenges. What these states share in common, however, is not a special propensity for failure but nuclear weapons, which are more than capable of upsetting the distribution of material capabilities throughout the world. In these instances the United States, as leader of a coalition, might have to intervene to secure nuclear materials and weapons should the governments collapse, which is another way of saying that the international community must get serious about counterproliferation. The point is small, the implications enormous. Some states pose substantive challenges to international order, others do not.

## **International Order and Terrorism**

Terrorism is the second issue thought to threaten international order. Terrorists think strategically, as evidenced by the fact that they play their deadly game to win in the long term. They offer a glimmer of hope to the forlorn and destitute, while attempting to force states to come to terms with their demands. They also live in secrecy, which is another reason why they are so problematic. No one can trust them, not even those who hide and comfort them. In short, terrorists pose strategic problems for states, but terrorism has never significantly upset international order. From this perspective, terrorism is a domestic security issue, not an international one, as the term *homeland security* suggests.



When thinking about the terror problem, however, it has become common to exaggerate its importance by downplaying what has been the traditional problem for states, namely, war. During the past 200 years, war has decimated empires, laid waste to countries, and claimed millions of lives, while terrorism, its horrendous nature aside, has claimed far fewer lives. In way of comparison, 625 people died as a result of international terror in 2003; 35 were Americans. This figure is less than the 725 killed during 2002. As these numbers make clear, terrorism is a weapon of the weak; and while terrorists have incredible will, they do not wield incredible power.

This is not meant to downplay the importance of deterring acts of terror or stopping terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction (WMD). However, should the day come when terrorists gain access to WMD, they will, in all likelihood, acquire them from men or women who live in states. States remain the most important actors in international life because they monopolize the most destructive power in the world. How statesmen choose to use that power when dealing with terror is yet another important challenge that they face.

It has become common to suggest that terrorism cannot be deterred, but a growing consensus is emerging around the notion that, in fact, it can. But what of intervention—does the evidence suggest it can solve the terror problem? On the contrary, a positive relationship appears to exist among terror and intervention. That is, as intervention increases, so do terror incidents. As far back as 1997, the Defense Science Board noted a correlation among what it called an “activist American foreign policy” and terrorist attacks against the United States. Ten years later, this became more apparent as suicide terror rose in places it was never seen before. Prior to America’s intervention, there were no reports of suicide terrorism in Iraq. In 2003 there were an estimated 25 attacks. By 2004 that number had grown to 140 and in 2005 had ballooned to an estimated 478, claiming an untold number of lives. By the end of 2005, there were an estimated 200 attacks and by the following year, that number had increased another 50 percent to almost 300.

That intervention yields terror comes as a surprise, and it is too soon to conclude that there is a causal argument to be made. Nonetheless, while more research in this area is required, one analyst has shown how terror can be thought of as a reaction to the presence of occupation forces. More specifically, it has been used successfully to compel democracies to withdraw their forces from territories that terrorists claim as their homeland.

In this regard, suicide terror appears to be an effective punishment strategy, and intervention, with its accompanying boots on the ground, merely creates more targets for the terrorists. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that even in those cases where terror has been effective, it has altered the order of local politics, not international ones.

## **International Order and Genocide**

Since 1945 the international community has vowed to end genocide, but as Cambodia, Rwanda, and Darfur attest, the international community is painfully slow to act against states that commit it. This is as true today as it was when Hitler's Germany launched an all-out attack on Europe's Jews. In this regard, the Holocaust remains a hard test for all arguments regarding genocide, particularly the idea that intervention can stop it.<sup>10</sup>

In a peculiar way, Raul Hilberg recognized this and wrote about it in his massive account of the destruction of the European Jews. As he noted, "The task of destroying the Jews put the German bureaucracy to a supreme test," and the technocrats solved this problem by passing the test.<sup>11</sup> Meticulous in detail and majestic in scope, Hilberg's interpretation forces readers to come to terms with the perpetrators. What makes them so disturbing is not found in their extraordinary nature but in their ordinary one. "We are not dealing with individuals who had their own moral standards," he argued. The bureaucrats' moral makeup was "no different than the rest of the population." How to explain the large-scale killing operation that put to death more than six million? "The Germans overcame the administrative and moral obstacles to a killing operation."<sup>12</sup> It was in their bones, and intervention was no match for its ferocity.

Before it was all done, the Germans had constructed a massive bureaucracy, along with a language that had meaning across all levels of authority that dehumanized the victims and rationalized killing. To suggest that an intervention could have stopped them from doing so seems dubious. How could force be used to destroy a bureaucratic structure that existed not only in the minds of the participants but in their bones as well? It would seem that intervention, in this case, could do little to end the killing. It might have halted things momentarily, but because genocide was in the perpetrators' viscera, ending the genocide in Europe took a war that was as brutal as anything we have to compare it with.

To recognize genocide, condemn it, and hold perpetrators accountable through the enforcement of international law is vital for the civilized world, and in this regard, to suggest that intervention can stop it trivializes its nature. Any attempt to end the lives of a group of people because they are different is a crime and should be dealt with accordingly. The crime is one of aggression, because in the face of aggression, neither peace nor rights can exist. The wrong that the perpetrator commits is to force men, women, and children to flee or fight for their lives, which legally puts genocide into the domain of war. Genocide might be civilization's fatal flaw in that it does not upset the material basis of international order, but its presence makes a mockery of international community. Policy makers would do well to understand that to rid the world of genocide, states must be willing to go to war; nothing short of war can stop it once it has begun.

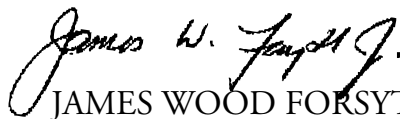
### **A World without Intervention**

Suppose, as the result of a cataclysm, all of our scientific knowledge about international politics were lost, save for one sentence to be passed on to the next generation. What would it say? It would read as follows: *States, regardless of their internal composition, goals, or desires, pursue interests they judge best.* In pursuing interests, shrewd statesmen understand the important differences between international and domestic factors, especially when it comes to establishing and maintaining international order. In international politics, material factors and historical forces shape and constrain the behavior of states, not domestic ones. This has been missed by interventionists who have sought to reshape international politics by meddling in the domestic politics of countries as diverse as Guatemala, Iran, Cuba, and Vietnam. Why? Interventionists fail to see the great, albeit tragic, continuities of international life, which is a life of inequality, conflict, and occasionally, war. Instead they downplay reality, attempt to transform it, or both by choosing to ignore these harsh, yet real, concerns. The intervention in Iraq, which was billed as something that would not only reshape the politics of that country but the politics of the Middle East and hence the world, has failed to do so. For these reasons, policy makers would do well to embrace reality and eschew intervention. What might this mean for policy?

Moving away from an interventionist foreign policy would allow policy makers to focus on security issues that have been neglected for the past several years. Failed states, terrorism, and genocide are serious problems worthy of attention, but they have never upset international order and

pose no serious threat to do so in the immediate future.<sup>13</sup> Nuclear weapons, however, do pose such challenges, and the recent move by the United States to address its nuclear arsenal and posture reflect a growing consensus that there are more important things to deal with than intervention.

Similarly, policy makers would do well to pay attention to the changing nature of the international political economy to gauge how the US economy might stack up in the new world of winners and losers. An affordable force structure that is balanced and capable of deterring and compelling will prove to be more useful in the long run than one primed for counter-insurgency. Lastly, by recognizing the limits of intervention, a renewed sense of humility might be brought back into security discourse. Perfect security can never be achieved, but states can squander their power in its pursuit if they are not prudent. Kennan had a deep understanding of this: The ruling of distant peoples is not “our dish.” Let us remove it from the menu in the years ahead.

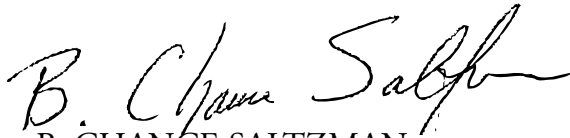


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## Notes

1. George Kennan, *American Diplomacy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 19.
2. The United States can afford to spend more than most and assume more risks than others because of its relative power. However, the more often a state uses its force, the weaker it becomes.
3. Defense secretary Robert Gates' new budget priorities clearly reflect this idea.
4. Thomas P. M. Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2004), 298.
5. United Nations, “List of Member States,” <http://www.un.org/members/growth.shtml>.

6. Fund for Peace—A Nonprofit Research and Educational Organization, *2008 Failed States Index*, <http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/>.
7. World Bank, *2007 World Development Report—Gross Domestic Product*, <http://econ.worldbank.org>.
8. In a detailed analysis of the political, religious, and economic factors most prevalent in states affiliated with terrorist organizations, it was found that the convergence of repressive politics, a homogenous religious population, and a growing, albeit uneven, economy produced conditions most supportive of terrorist organizations.
9. B. C. Saltzman, "Liberty and Justice for All: The Democracy Project and the Global War on Terrorism," masters thesis, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Air University, 2005.
10. Some of the most creative thinking regarding the use of force and genocide stems from the work of Dr. Douglas C. Peifer. See his *Stopping Mass Killings in Africa* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2008) for an interesting argument regarding airpower and genocide. While I am sympathetic with the spirit and intent of his research, I remain skeptical as to its practicality.
11. Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1961).
12. Ibid., 205.
13. The obvious exceptions being a war to end genocide or a terrorist with WMD, as previously stated.

# The Effects of Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons on Civil-Military Relations in India

*Ayesha Ray*

THE DEVELOPMENT of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program in the 1980s contained serious implications for Indian civil-military relations in the 1990s. Towards the late 1980s, India's brief but risky military encounters with Pakistan and the rapid development of its nuclear program dramatically shaped Indian approaches to the use of nuclear weapons in the 1990s. Not only was there a fundamental shift in Indian political attitudes towards the development of nuclear technology for strategic use, but more importantly, the Indian military began playing a critical role in the development of new strategic doctrines which could effectively deal with a Pakistani nuclear attack. The Indian military's role in influencing the development of nuclear strategy is a critical part of the evolution in Indian civil-military approaches to nuclear policy. More importantly, the military's attempts to assert its expertise in nuclear policy are of fundamental importance in addressing challenges to the division of labor between civilians and the military.

## **Indian Political Thought and Nuclear Strategy in the 1970s**

To understand how the development of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program may have affected Indian civil-military relations, it becomes important to revisit Indian approaches to nuclear strategy in the 1970s and 1980s. Interestingly, the Indian case reveals that despite the existence of external security threats in the 1970s, India's political leadership found no compelling reason to develop nuclear weapons for strategic use. In fact,

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any kind of serious thinking about the strategic use of nuclear weapons was missing on the political side.

In the aftermath of the 1962 and 1965 wars, China and Pakistan became immediate threats to Indian security. In 1964, China conducted its first nuclear tests. China also established a two-pronged relationship with Pakistan and the United States—while it pursued a military relationship with Pakistan, it simultaneously engaged in diplomatic camaraderie with the United States. China acquiesced to Islamabad's request for arms and assisted in the development of Pakistan's domestic arms-production capabilities. It also provided Islamabad with several antiaircraft guns and approximately 700 T-59 and PT-76 tanks.<sup>1</sup> With regard to US policy, Sino-American friendship became an important policy instrument for both Republicans and Democrats in Washington.<sup>2</sup>

For India, a US-China alliance contained possibilities for nuclear and technological collaboration between the two countries. American policy in the subcontinent from 1967 had also become increasingly sympathetic towards Pakistan. In the spring of 1967, the United States resumed the sale of military spare parts to Pakistan. In October 1970, reports indicated that Pakistan had received new American bombers and armored personnel carriers.<sup>3</sup> America's military relationship with Pakistan and Pakistan's military relationship with China compounded India's external threat environment. For Indian political leaders, China appeared to pose a much greater threat to India's external security, given its nuclear capabilities and its close military relationship with Pakistan. In its annual report for 1967–68, the Indian Ministry of Defense emphatically stated, "The Chinese danger posed to be a long-term one while the danger from Pakistan centered on certain problems which did not give it such a long-term character."<sup>4</sup> The report also emphasized the "accelerated pace" at which China's nuclear weapons program was developing and outlined fears about Pakistan's receipt of military supplies from China and the United States.

To counter the threat posed by China and Pakistan, New Delhi began to increase its defense expenditures and turned towards the Soviet Union for military guarantees. The Indian Ministry of Defense's 1964–65 annual report introduced a defense plan which would be implemented over a period of five years. It included strengthening India's defense production base to meet the requirements of arms and ammunition and improving the fields of procurement, storage, and training.<sup>5</sup> New Delhi also entered into a production agreement with the Soviets to make MiG-21s in India.<sup>6</sup>

From 1967 to 1971, India imported 150 Su-7 fighter-bombers, 450 T-54 and T-55 tanks, 150 PT-76 amphibious tanks, and six Petya-class frigates from the Soviet Union. The Soviet-India defense relationship was exactly the type of external security blanket that New Delhi was looking for in the face of external threats.

In 1971, India went a step ahead and signed the historic Soviet-India Friendship Treaty. This agreement secured diplomatic and military guarantees from the Soviet side and established a firm foundation for India's continued diplomatic and military partnership with the Soviets.<sup>7</sup> However, one of the glaring drawbacks in Indian defense policy during this time was that, except for securing military guarantees from the Soviet Union and increasing defense expenditure, India's political leadership was not doing much more to improve military affairs. The development of serious military strategy and improvements in conventional war-fighting methods to deal with possible future threats from China and Pakistan were completely absent. By the early 1970s, India's nuclear weapons program, which had begun in the 1950s under the aegis of a small group of scientists, was making sufficient progress. However, it would soon become apparent that India's nuclear weapons program had very little connection to its defense policy.

What is particularly striking is that even though India had a well-entrenched nuclear weapons program in the early 1970s and civilians displayed an intention to develop nuclear weapons, the program was developing separately from Indian defense policy. Various political statements made to the public demonstrate that India's political leadership was not thinking of nuclear weapons in strategic terms. For instance, on 2 August 1972 and again on 15 November 1973, the prime minister released a statement to the Indian Parliament that read: "The Department of Atomic Energy had been studying various situations under which peaceful underground nuclear explosions could prove to be of economic benefit; that progress in this new technology was constantly being reviewed from theoretical as well as experimental angles; and that underground tests for peaceful purposes would be undertaken."<sup>8</sup> Such public political statements clearly alluded to the nonstrategic use of nuclear technology. Yet, in a surprising move that shocked the international community, India went ahead and conducted its first nuclear tests in 1974.<sup>9</sup>



It is necessary to underscore that these tests did not contain any serious ramifications for Indian civil-military relations. Rather than think about the military use of nuclear weapons, India's political leadership maintained an ambiguous approach to nuclear policy. This was not uncommon, as political arguments favoring a nonmilitary use for nuclear technology had been made as early as the 1950s. India's political leadership had frequently argued in favor of the development of nuclear technology and not nuclear weapons. In making such claims, they had made a conscious distinction between the use of nuclear *technology* and the use of nuclear *weapons*. For civilians, nuclear *technology* was "good," as it was essential for India's economic development. On the other hand, nuclear *weapons* were "bad," as they had the potential to unleash enormous destruction. This, however, does not mean that civilians were unaware of the potential use of nuclear technology for strategic purposes. Stated simply, they were just not interested in developing it for strategic use.

In trying to explain why Indian political leaders gave such little importance to the strategic use of nuclear weapons in the 1960s and 1970s, Rajesh Basrur argues that throughout history, Indian strategic culture accorded limited value to nuclear deterrence as a basis for national security. Moreover, this strategic culture was "consistently incremental in its responses to external and internal pressures for substantial policy change."<sup>10</sup> When it came to nuclear weapons, the approach adopted by civilians was that of "nuclear minimalism."<sup>11</sup> For many Indian security experts, like K. Subrahmanyam, "nuclear weapons were not weapons of war; they were political weapons."<sup>12</sup> India's political leadership perceived a very limited utility of nuclear weapons as a source of national security. Civilians also exhibited a political rather than technical understanding of nuclear weapons. On one hand, while they recognized that power was an important requisite for security, they also considered nuclear weapons morally reprehensible because of the risks associated with their use.<sup>13</sup> Indian defense experts further suggest that New Delhi's lack of strategic thinking on nuclear weapons was directly tied to its inexperience with total war. Unlike the United States, India had remained relatively isolated from the experience of the First and Second World Wars. Its inexperience with total wars kept most sections of Indian society insulated from questions of national security and strategy. Moreover, the "indifference and apathy induced by years of British rule" just helped sustain a lack of strategic thought.<sup>14</sup> Former vice-chief of the Indian army, Vijay Oberoi, observed that the military was always viewed as "a

repressive instrument of British policy and India's political leadership continued to think along such lines even after independence."<sup>15</sup> Therefore, one could claim that due to a very different set of historical experiences, the absence of Indian strategic thought on security issues may have been the single most important reason explaining why Indian political leaders were not thinking of nuclear weapons in strategic terms during the 1970s.

Political hesitancy in accepting the strategic value of nuclear weapons, of course, left Indian nuclear policy with no coherent shape or structure. In addition, the collusion of India's political leaders and scientific establishment in the development of its nuclear weapons program with no strategic purpose in mind had the net effect of excluding the Indian military from nuclear policy making. Civilians had routinely shared the scientists' optimism about nuclear weapons being the prime symbol of India's technological prowess—a resource which could enhance its economic development by channeling its energy base. However, some sections of the Indian military thought otherwise. More specifically, the Indian armed forces appeared unconvinced about the scientists' capability to develop nuclear weapons without military expertise. When the 1974 nuclear tests were conducted with the aid of the scientists, the military appeared rather alarmed that the scientists had been able to pull off this gargantuan feat with the help of India's political leadership. But critics may ask: Why did the Indian military not make a stronger case for their inclusion in nuclear policy in the 1970s?

In examining the nature of Indian civil-military relations during this time, it may appear arbitrary or unfair to place all the blame on India's political leadership for the military's exclusion from nuclear policy. This is because, prior to the 1974 tests, there was no evidence that the armed forces had made a powerful case for the strategic use of nuclear weapons. In fact, throughout the 1960s and up until the early 1970s, the Indian military had remained quite ambivalent about the benefits accrued from nuclear weapons. Stephen Cohen pointed out the reasons for such ambivalence—from a military point of view, an Indian nuclear weapons program in the 1970s seemed institutionally disruptive, as the military had to deal “with questions regarding the control of nuclear weapons, the targets against which the weapons could be deployed and the effects of nuclear weapons on conventional war strategy.”<sup>16</sup> As the Indian military had adhered to a nineteenth-century organizational structure for the longest time, its experience had been limited to relatively unsophisticated military

technologies, and it was completely unfamiliar with the use of nuclear technology. Hence, despite some realization about the inherent value of nuclear weapons for strategic purposes, the military's deep unfamiliarity with such modern weapons precluded them from exerting unnecessary pressure on the civilians to develop nuclear capability.<sup>17</sup> This situation, however, was soon going to change. In the 1980s, India's external security considerations and a series of crises with Pakistan would prompt a major shift in military approaches to the development of nuclear strategy.

### **Indian Military Thought and Nuclear Strategy in the 1980s and 1990s**

From the late 1970s, India observed a surge in Pakistan's nuclear weapons program. Some South Asian scholars argue that Pakistan's nuclear weapons program was developing simultaneously with an Indian nuclear program.<sup>18</sup> As one Pakistani scholar noted, "India's superiority in conventional weapons and its quest for political pre-eminence in the region appeared to be a plausible motivating force for Pakistani policy makers to pursue a bomb option."<sup>19</sup> Moreover, various Pakistani leaders, including Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who served as Pakistan's president from 1971 to 1973, displayed concerns about India's nuclear weapons program back in the 1960s. Pakistan's war with India in 1965, the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, and the 1974 Indian nuclear tests aroused fears within Pakistani political circles about Indian intentions of developing a nuclear weapons program that, in the future, could be used to deter Pakistan from attacking India. The Bangladesh war also demonstrated India's conventional arms superiority, which further compounded Pakistan's insecurity.<sup>20</sup> And so, India's conventional superiority is often cited as an important reason for Pakistan's move to build its own nuclear weapons program.

The development of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program began around the same time India launched its nuclear program in the late 1950s. The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission was established in 1955 to promote and develop nuclear energy for economic development.<sup>21</sup> From the 1960s, as relations with India began to deteriorate, Pakistan's nuclear weapons program underwent a simultaneous change. Discussing the reasons for a change in Islamabad's nuclear weapons program, Samina Ahmed noted that the 1965 war with India marked an "important turning point" in Pakistan's nuclear program because by the end of the war, the conventional

weapons disparity had quickly shifted in India's favor.<sup>22</sup> After the war, Pakistan began securing military guarantees from China, which supplied it with an armory of conventional weapons. Pakistan's defeat in the 1971 war with India further pushed Islamabad in the direction of a full-fledged weapons option.<sup>23</sup> In 1971, Pakistan began to operate a secret network to obtain necessary materials for developing its uranium enrichment capabilities. President Bhutto entered into an agreement with North Korea in September 1971 to obtain critical weapons, following which North Korea dispatched an arms shipment to Pakistan. During most of the 1970s, Pakistan acquired artillery, multiple-rocket launchers, and ammunition from North Korea.<sup>24</sup> Also, under the leadership of Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, a German-trained metallurgist, Pakistan developed its first nuclear facility at Kahuta in 1976.<sup>25</sup> News about the development of Pakistan's nuclear ambitions would soon reach the United States.

In the early 1980s, the US State Department published a report outlining how Pakistan was well on its way towards developing a nuclear weapons program. This report further stated that Pakistan had obtained nuclear technology from Europe and China and that China had cooperated with Pakistan in the production of fissile material.<sup>26</sup> In April 1981, Senator Alan Cranston reported news of a construction activity at the Pakistani test site in Baluchistan. By the late 1980s, Pakistan published various articles on centrifuge design, making its nuclear weapons capability public.<sup>27</sup> After 1988 its ballistic missile program further expanded with aid from the Chinese, and in 1989, Pakistan tested its short-range nuclear missile, Hatf-I and Hatf-II.<sup>28</sup>

The possession of nuclear capabilities by Pakistan intensified Indian security concerns. By the mid-1980s, India was clearly convinced of a Pakistani nuclear program.<sup>29</sup> Sumit Ganguly noted that "in the early 1980s, the clamor for the acquisition of nuclear weapons grew as US sources provided evidence of Pakistan's quest for nuclear weapons and the Chinese supply of a nuclear weapons design to Pakistan."<sup>30</sup> In 1983 India began to process weapons-grade plutonium. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the scientific-military establishment in India acquired a declared nuclear weapons capability. Several reports written during this time suggest that India had plutonium resources sufficient to build between 12 and 40 weapons.<sup>31</sup> While debating whether to keep India's nuclear weapons option open, Prime Minister Gandhi

underscored a simultaneous shift towards military modernization. But few within India's political establishment realized how the development of Pakistan's nuclear program was going to affect Indian security in unexpected ways.

By the mid-1980s, Pakistan's nuclear weapons program was developing at an alarming pace. In 1984 Pakistan had acquired the capability for producing low-enriched uranium.<sup>32</sup> Dr. A. Q. Khan held periodic interviews with the press in which he publicly talked about Pakistan's developing nuclear program. During one such interview in February 1984, Khan claimed that Pakistan had already acquired nuclear weapons capability.<sup>33</sup> By the end of the 1980s, under Khan's leadership, the Pakistan Kahuta Laboratories acquired the means to produce highly enriched uranium. But more importantly, Pakistan had begun trading nuclear secrets with Iran, North Korea, and Libya.<sup>34</sup> As Gaurav Kampani notes, beginning in the 1980s and during the 1990s, Khan and some of his top associates began "offering a one-stop shop for countries that wished to acquire nuclear technologies for a weapons program." All these countries had obtained blueprints, technical design data, specifications, components, machinery, enrichment equipment, and notes on Khan's P-1 and next-generation P-2 centrifuges.<sup>35</sup> In the 1990s, there were also frequent reports of visits by Iranian nuclear scientists to Karachi for technical briefings on Pakistan's nuclear designs.

Pakistan's clandestine nuclear operations did not go unnoticed. From the early 1990s, Washington began raising concerns about nuclear proliferation with Pakistan. In the mid-1990s UNSCOM inspectors in Iraq had uncovered documentary proof that A. Q. Khan had approached Saddam Hussein's regime to assist the Iraqi nuclear weapons program in the area of centrifuge-based uranium enrichment.<sup>36</sup> Despite international concerns, on 7 February 1992, Pakistani foreign minister, Shahryar Khan, in an interview with the *Washington Post*, announced that the country had developed the capability to assemble one or more nuclear weapons.<sup>37</sup> Shahryar Khan's public pronouncement made the international community increasingly worried about the effects of a Pakistani nuclear program on Indian nuclear policy. In 1988 the *New York Times* reported that India had embarked on an ambitious nuclear energy program that required the storage of tons of plutonium for potential use for nuclear weapons. The report further stated that from 1985 to 1987, India had produced large quantities of plutonium from domestically built sites. During the same year, a

task force report published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace concluded that by mid-1987 India “may have accumulated a stockpile of 100 to 200 kilograms of plutonium which was sufficient to build 12–40 weapons.”<sup>38</sup> And so, the biggest challenge for the international community in addressing nuclear proliferation concerns in South Asia was the growing evidence of nuclear weapons development for strategic use in both countries.

The development of Pakistan's nuclear capability thus provides a background for the discussion of a series of brief military encounters that would occur between India and Pakistan in the 1980s. More importantly, the manner in which the Indian military responded to these crises is vital in understanding the sudden importance of nuclear strategy for Indian civil-military relations.

By the early 1980s there were several indications that India's political and military leadership had begun to consider the strategic use of nuclear weapons. George Perkovich claims that when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi came to power in 1980, she hoped to keep India's nuclear weapons option open. In 1981 Gandhi had raised concerns about Pakistan's ability to develop the nuclear bomb. She argued that the possession of nuclear weapons capability by Pakistan had compelled New Delhi to weigh its nuclear weapons option more seriously. In other words, Pakistan's nuclear capability was directly pushing India's decision to declare its own nuclear capability.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, various American intelligence reports published in 1982 suggested that Indian military planners were urging Prime Minister Gandhi to draw up a plan to destroy Islamabad's facilities.<sup>40</sup> For example, following the induction of British-procured Jaguar aircraft in the 1980s, the Indian air force developed a brief study in which it weighed the possibility of attacking Pakistan's nuclear facilities at Kahuta. The objective of the study was to neutralize the threat posed by Pakistan through a direct attack on its nuclear facilities.<sup>41</sup> Prime Minister Gandhi, however, did not support any preventive war plans, owing to fears that a Pakistani attack on Indian facilities would prove very costly for India.<sup>42</sup> Yet, Gandhi kept India's nuclear option open in fear that Pakistan would declare its nuclear weapons capability.<sup>43</sup>

By 1984 the possibility of a nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan became real when Pakistani president, Gen Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, informed the United States that India was trying to emulate Israel's attack upon Iraq's Osiraq reactors with the prime intention of destroying

Pakistan's nuclear program, an allegation that Indira Gandhi vehemently denied.<sup>44</sup> Amidst such accusations, the inability of American satellites to locate two of India's Jaguar squadrons intensified the threat of a nuclear confrontation between the two adversaries.<sup>45</sup> The United States was alarmed that both countries were making public threats about going nuclear. While neither side came up with any conclusive evidence about its intentions to attack the other, this initial crisis forced India and Pakistan to seek commitments from their allies—the Soviet Union and the United States, respectively.<sup>46</sup> Pakistan's plea to the United States made India secure guarantees from the Soviets that in case of a nuclear conflict, the latter would intervene on India's behalf. But despite fears of a nuclear war between India and Pakistan, both countries reached an accord in December 1985 in which they agreed not to attack each other's nuclear facilities.<sup>47</sup>

Tensions between India and Pakistan, however, continued after 1985. A second crisis erupted in 1986–87, popularly known as the Brasstacks crisis. What began as a routine military exercise conducted by the Indian army in 1987 contained the seeds for a nuclear confrontation with Pakistan. Under the leadership of Gen Krishnaswamy Sundarji, the Indian army launched an exercise to test the mechanization of the armed forces.<sup>48</sup> The Brasstacks exercise was General Sundarji's invention. He specifically wanted to integrate India's special weapons, including tactical nuclear bombs, into day-to-day field maneuvers.<sup>49</sup> The exercise was held in the northern Rajasthan and involved 10 divisions of the Indian army, including two strike corps and approximately 400,000 troops. But the large buildup of Indian troops along the Line of Control (LOC) set off alarm bells in Islamabad. Fearing an attack from India, Pakistan began deploying large numbers of troops along the LOC. Pakistani troops quickly moved close to the India-Pakistan border near Punjab in a dangerous maneuver that threatened to cut off communications between Kashmir and the rest of India.<sup>50</sup>

During the height of the crisis, the international community became legitimately concerned about the outbreak of a nuclear war between India and Pakistan (even though, in hindsight, such fears were exaggerated).<sup>51</sup> While both countries refrained from engaging in a nuclear conflict, the crisis revealed how India's military leadership was thinking about the possible use of nuclear weapons. Anticipating Pakistani fears of a nuclear attack from India, certain sections of the Indian army felt that the military

balance had shifted in India's favor. Moreover, the chief of army staff, General Sundarji, and other senior military officers believed that the situation was ripe to take out Pakistan in a first strike.<sup>52</sup> Although India's political leadership did not share the military's views, Sundarji had apparently made some of the army's sentiments clear to Defense minister Arun Singh. Sundarji had also gone a step further by taking the Indian air force into confidence about the army's plans to divert forces to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Accordingly, the Indian army began to develop preventive war doctrines without complete knowledge of the civilians.<sup>53</sup> Of course, on being informed about the military's plans, there was immediate intervention from the political side. Rajiv Gandhi was particularly outraged at the way in which the Indian military had kept the civilians uninformed about their strategic plans for so long.<sup>54</sup>

A third and final crisis, and perhaps the most dangerous, occurred in 1990. In the 1980s the Muslims of Indian-held Kashmir began organizing themselves against the central government in New Delhi. In 1984 the Congress Party ousted a popularly elected state government and rigged the Kashmiri state elections in 1987, creating further unrest amongst the Kashmiri youth.<sup>55</sup> Towards the latter part of 1989, Pakistan conducted a large military exercise called *Zarb-i-Momin*. Soon after, there was a sharp increase in insurgent-related activities in the Indian state of Kashmir. Consequently, Pakistan began to extend its support to disaffected Kashmiri youth by arming and training Kashmiri Muslim terrorists.<sup>56</sup> New Delhi responded by strengthening its military forces in Kashmir and Punjab, which came as another big surprise to Pakistan's political leadership. Islamabad was apparently unclear about Indian intentions and feared that a larger number of forces deployed by New Delhi would launch an offensive operation against it.<sup>57</sup> The conflict was prevented from escalating to the nuclear level through direct US intervention. William Clark, US ambassador to New Delhi, and Robert Oakley, US ambassador to Pakistan, assured the public and the international community that the military on both sides had not made any large-scale preparations for war. The Gates Mission, headed by the deputy director of the CIA, Robert Gates, marked the culmination of American efforts in resolving tensions between the two countries.<sup>58</sup>

The 1990 crisis had important ramifications for Indian civil-military relations. During that crisis, India's political leadership was alerted by the Indian military to the possibility of a nuclear attack from Pakistan.



The Indian army had expressed concerns about Pakistani intentions to explode a nuclear weapon to communicate the threat of a nuclear attack against India. To counter an imminent Pakistani attack, Indian prime minister V. P. Singh ordered a group of scientific advisors to undertake specific emergency measures.<sup>59</sup> The new emergency measures included a reconsideration of India's nuclear policy options if Pakistan "employed its nuclear power for military purposes."<sup>60</sup> Towards the end of the crisis, V. P. Singh consulted his principal secretary and noted that "the situation between India and Pakistan was scary" and that decisions "could not be left just between the Prime Minister and Scientific Advisor." Singh was particularly concerned that in the event of a possible nuclear strike from Pakistan, "there was no formal procedure to decide who would do what." Therefore, it was necessary for the civilians "to institutionalize it."<sup>61</sup>

Concerned by the apparent lacuna in military strategy, V. P. Singh enlisted the support of Minister of State for Defense Arun Singh, who was asked to undertake a classified review of India's nuclear capabilities and work out the parameters of a nuclear command and control structure. Accordingly, Arun Singh set up an informal committee, which consisted of members from the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO). Along with the scientists, senior officials from the Indian military and bureaucracy were invited to be part of this committee. At the end of the deliberations, Arun Singh was "dismayed" to learn that the three services had little knowledge about India's nuclear capability. Following the meeting, in an attempt to make the decision-making process transparent to both civilians and the military, he commented: "It is clear that we had to end the wink and nudge approach. When it is crunch time you just can't ring up the Chief of Staff and say press the button. The army will not take the scientists' word that it will work. They will want to know if they do have a usable credible deterrent. Otherwise they are likely to say buzz off. It is a significant disadvantage if you don't have a command and control structure."<sup>62</sup> Arun Singh's conclusion indicated a major gap between the scientific and military understanding of India's nuclear policy and the absence of a command and control system to deal with Pakistan's developing nuclear capability. The committee's deliberations only helped sharpen the ongoing debate about the Indian military's role in nuclear strategy.

## **The Significance of Military Expertise on Indian Nuclear Strategy**

The development of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program and a series of military encounters between India and Pakistan in the 1980s point to the emergence of a professional Indian military—a military that was seriously thinking about the strategic use of nuclear weapons. When compared to the 1970s, this shift in the Indian military's approach to nuclear weapons and its influence on nuclear policy was nothing short of dramatic. The various crises with Pakistan had created legitimate concerns in Indian political and military circles about the possible use of nuclear weapons. The biggest push for their strategic use had come from a few senior military officers in the Indian army who were desperately trying to assert the military's expertise in nuclear policy. This, in itself, was the beginning of a monumental change in Indian civil-military relations.

It is common knowledge that as early as 1981, India's former chief of army staff, General Sundarji, was one of the first in the Indian army to compile two major essays calling for the introduction of nuclear weapons into the Indian military.<sup>63</sup> A few years later, Sundarji explained in an interview that "throughout the 1980s, the armed forces tried to create doctrines and military formations that would meet both conventional and nuclear threats with existing hardware."<sup>64</sup> Moreover, nuclear doctrines were being developed alongside conventional doctrines.<sup>65</sup> The Indian army had also acquired equipment with nuclear, biological, and chemical defense capabilities while trying "to incorporate a doctrine of denial based on an ability to disperse and concentrate quickly."<sup>66</sup> These new doctrines of mobility and mechanization, also known as RAPID doctrines, were tested in the Brasstacks exercise. For the Indian military, the creation of such doctrines had been a direct response to the Pakistani threat. In 1986, pointing to the problems emanating from Pakistan's nuclear capability, Sundarji wrote,

There are enough indicators to suggest that Pakistan has achieved or is close to achieving nuclear weapons capability. The Indian military was gearing its organization, training and equipment in such a manner that is not only effective in conventional use but in the unlikely event of nuclear weapons being used by an adversary in the combat zone, the Indian military would limit damage both psychological and physical.<sup>67</sup>

And so, under the leadership of General Sundarji, some sections of the Indian military began to think seriously about the potential use of nuclear weapons.

Besides the army, the Indian air force also took a bold initiative in developing nuclear weapons. The air force wanted a strategy that would develop a conventional offense against nuclear weapons and create a strategic air command that could effectively integrate aircraft missiles with strategic reconnaissance.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, in an attempt to ward off any possible preventive attack from Pakistan and develop doctrines of denial, the Indian air force dispersed its Jaguar, MiG-23, and MiG-27 tactical strike aircraft.<sup>69</sup> Evidence of such operational changes in military doctrines to deal with Pakistan's nuclear capability supports how the Indian army and air force were thinking about the military utility of nuclear weapons. The attempt to develop sophisticated military doctrines that incorporated the use of nuclear weapons underscored a greater role for the Indian military in nuclear strategy.

From the mid-1980s, Indian military doctrine had developed a distinct shape to address Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability, moving away from a purely conventional deterrent to "one that incorporated nuclear weapons."<sup>70</sup> Even though India lacked any sophisticated nuclear doctrine during this time, the presence of nuclear weapons was conditioning a debate in Indian civil-military relations about the effects of nuclear weapons on conventional war. The Integrated Guided Missile Development Program called for a series of missile systems to be developed over subsequent years. Even though the program was run under the auspices of the DRDO, Indian scientists had begun to tie civilian and military research together.<sup>71</sup> India also adopted a deterrence policy without actually developing nuclear weapons. The new deterrence policy included concepts like "existential deterrence" and "nonweaponized deterrence."<sup>72</sup> Existential deterrence meant that while India had the capability to develop nuclear weapons, its nuclear weapons program was still rudimentary.<sup>73</sup> Yet, the presence of a growing nuclear capability was sufficient to deter Pakistan or any other enemy from attacking India in the first place.

Emphasizing the impact of nuclear weapons on conventional war, General Sundarji noted that "while leaders on both sides had once viewed war as a means to achieve certain policy objectives, today, the same calculus did not apply."<sup>74</sup> While no one really knew what type of assembly system was in place, the assumption was that India had either assembled nuclear weapons or deployed nuclear weapons in the field.<sup>75</sup> It is important to note here that the use of concepts such as nonweaponized deterrence or existential deterrence were important indicators of a shift in thinking about nuclear weapons.

These concepts may appear primitive compared to American doctrines of massive retaliation and flexible response, but they were significant in that Indian political leaders and the military were struggling to adopt an appropriate deterrence policy for the first time and, in doing so, were simultaneously thinking about the strategic use of nuclear weapons.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the threat posed by Pakistan's nuclear arsenal and the dangers of an all-out nuclear confrontation with Pakistan had become obvious to almost everyone in Indian political and military circles (especially since both countries had already shared a series of crises). Interestingly, India's political leadership was beginning to pay careful attention to what the military was saying with regard to the country's nuclear options. At a seminar organized by the United Service Institute (USI) on 10 March 1990, serving and retired Indian officials from all three services, diplomats, and academics debated whether India should exercise its nuclear option. The deliberations of this meeting revealed that most senior officers were in favor of building a strong nuclear arsenal. For instance, the chief of naval staff, Admiral Nadkarni, argued that a functional nuclear policy would help offset Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability. Nadkarni further noted that a nuclear arsenal would be cheaper to maintain than conventional forces.<sup>76</sup> Underscoring concerns about Pakistan's growing nuclear weapons capability, another senior military official, Gen V. N. Sharma, remarked that India would have "no option" but to possess "nuclear capability" if a potential hostile neighboring nation "acquired a capability to deploy nuclear weapons."<sup>77</sup> Other military officers also alerted Indian policy makers to the dangers of miscommunication and miscalculation between the two countries in a heightened nuclear environment. For instance, Lt Gen M. Thomas said that prospects of miscalculation in the ambiguous climate between India and Pakistan were of biggest concern for the military high command in India.<sup>78</sup> VADM K. K. Nayar, former vice-chief of naval staff, also pointed out that Pakistan's admission of having a capability to assemble a nuclear device "should force India to have a realistic assessment of security environment in the region."<sup>79</sup> Such statements made by all three services of the Indian military provide further evidence of a push for military doctrines that included ideas about the strategic use of nuclear weapons. But while civilians were only now beginning to pay attention to what the military was saying, the military had already taken the lead in developing India's nuclear strategy.

It is necessary to remember that the efforts of the Indian military to influence nuclear strategy were emerging in response to a strategic vacuum driven by the absence of civilian thinking on strategic issues. Civilians in India had “not shown any professional interest in either strategy or tactics of military operations” and “one of the grave weaknesses of the Indian system was that civilians had not developed a careful understanding of military matters.”<sup>80</sup> An Indian observer claimed that “Indian political leaders had seen nuclear weapons as a way of enhancing their own domestic standing and were always reluctant to talk about their use in military terms.”<sup>81</sup> Similarly, “there had been no serious effort to institutionalize nuclear weapons by incorporating them into the armed forces through the development of doctrine and military organization.”<sup>82</sup> Such statements have frequently appeared in commentaries made by Indian strategy and defense experts. All these statements, undoubtedly, point to the absence of serious political thinking on the military utility of nuclear weapons. For decades, India’s political leadership had been sending ambiguous signals to the entire world about what nuclear weapons meant for Indian security policy. They also kept the military far removed from nuclear policy due to fears that the military would become much too powerful if introduced to nuclear weapons.<sup>83</sup> But for the Indian military, the absence of strategic thinking by India’s political leadership on such vital national security issues indicated a lack of commitment to develop serious military doctrines. Moreover, the ambiguity in civilian approaches to nuclear weapons, of course, made the Indian military disenchanted, as “they were not getting what they wanted.”<sup>84</sup>

The Indian military’s role in thinking about nuclear weapons in the 1980s and early 1990s was an attempt to fill the void created by an absence of political thinking on nuclear strategy in the 1970s. The need to fill this void had been fuelled by the nature of nuclear technology, which introduced questions about the military’s expertise in using these weapons. Samuel Huntington noted that the military has a specific domain of competence, which distinguishes it from civilian functions. This area of military competence is called “the management of violence” and is separate from the act of violence itself.<sup>85</sup> The distinction between the military’s role in the management of violence and the military’s act of violence is critical in addressing why any professional military might want to assert its expertise in nuclear policy. The Indian military’s push for a nuclear strategy arose because of its dissatisfaction with a civilian policy that fre-

quently used the armed forces as an instrument of violence without giving it any power in the management of violence.

Huntington argued that the military can be used as a tool of political advice but “it is not a mindless tool because professional military officers possess expertise in judging the capabilities of the military instrument of power.”<sup>86</sup> The nature of nuclear technology and the military functions associated with its use had introduced India's political leadership to the importance of professional military expertise in the use of such weapons. More importantly, as civilians had thought very little about the military use of nuclear technology in the 1970s, the problem of delineating political and military functions in nuclear policy had emerged as a serious issue in Indian civil-military relations in the 1980s. As Brig Gurmeet Kanwal notes, the biggest challenge to civil-military relations was that “India first went nuclear and then began to worry about things like doctrine and strategy.”<sup>87</sup>

The introduction of new weapons required new methods for the management of violence. Moreover, as Huntington underscored, while the military man is conservative in strategy, he is inclined to be open-minded and progressive with respect to new weapons.<sup>88</sup> The Indian military and, more specifically, General Sundarji and other senior officers, had clearly displayed evidence of such thinking during and after the brief military encounters with Pakistan. Some observers believe that Sundarji had used the Brasstacks exercise to “judge the military's professional competence with new weapons.”<sup>89</sup> Others claim that Sundarji tried to assert his expertise only because he was obsessed with Islamabad's nuclear weapons capability and constantly worried about Pakistan's use of nuclear weapons in an attack on India.<sup>90</sup> By the late 1980s, it had become quite clear that the short conflict-like situations with Pakistan had brought India's political leadership face-to-face with the professional judgments of a military that was concerned about the management of conflicts in the shadow of nuclear weapons.<sup>91</sup>

For the Indian military, political discussions on the command and control of nuclear weapons were a significant development in itself. To aid India's political leadership in discussing nuclear command and control issues, senior Indian military officers like General Sundarji continued to emphasize problems with not having a sound nuclear strategy. To develop sophisticated command and control structures, Sundarji proposed the creation of a nuclear doctrine. He observed that “the lack of a nuclear doctrine in India and Pakistan was a dangerous thing. If you keep it

under wraps, you don't know what will develop." By the end of the 1990s crisis, Sundarji had also begun arguing for the creation of formal military doctrines which could control for possibilities of miscalculation in a war with Pakistan. To reduce the incidence of miscalculation, he suggested the adoption of a "declared" nuclear weapons posture.<sup>92</sup>

Political and military statements addressing nuclear command and control operations were indicative of an emerging agreement in Indian civil-military relations on the strategic use of nuclear weapons. When the V. P. Singh government was replaced by a new Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government, India's political leadership began paying even greater political attention to military inputs on nuclear strategy. There is evidence to show that the BJP government supported much of what the Indian military was telling the civilians. For instance, all India secretary of the BJP, J. P. Mathur, concurred with General Sundarji's position on nuclear weapons and believed that India "should go in for nuclear weapons by national consensus without wasting more time."<sup>93</sup> Also, in its election manifesto, the BJP proposed to arm the three services with nuclear weapons.<sup>94</sup> The BJP's affirmation of military views was a major step in the evolution of Indian political attitudes towards the military's role in nuclear policy.

Encouraged by a change in civilian attitudes towards the military's role in nuclear strategy, the Indian armed forces began to expand their influence on nuclear policy. In a rather significant development, the three services stepped up their programs to incorporate nuclear weapons in military strategy. By the early 1990s, the Indian navy had begun developing a nuclear submarine project commonly known as the Advanced Technology Vessel (ATV) project. VADM Premvir S. Das observes that the Indian navy's efforts to build nuclear submarines were deemed necessary to cope with threats from Pakistan, which was rapidly modernizing its navy.<sup>95</sup> A nuclear submarine project was also felt necessary to address "other burgeoning naval powers in the Indian Ocean."<sup>96</sup> By early 1997 India's chief of naval staff, ADM Vishnu Bhagwat, ordered a "technical audit" of the ATV project. Under Bhagwat's leadership, there emerged a committed cadre of officers who were dedicated to designing and building nuclear and diesel submarines.<sup>97</sup> Reports of the Indian navy's nuclear submarine project began appearing in various local newspapers. By late 1997, the *Pioneer* reported that India's nuclear submarine project was "on the verge of a critical breakthrough, with the Prototype Testing Center (PTC) at Kalpakkam getting ready for trials."<sup>98</sup> The PTC, located within

the Indira Gandhi Center for Atomic Research, was developed to test the submarine's turbines and propellers. Other reports suggested the operation of similar testing facilities at Vishakhapatnam.<sup>99</sup>

With the Indian navy having taken the lead in developing a nuclear submarine project, the army and air force stepped up pressure on civilians to develop a more sophisticated nuclear arsenal. In what may have been considered a monumental move in the history of Indian civil-military relations, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao permitted the "Chiefs of Staff" targets to be assigned to the army's Prithvi-1 (150-km range/1,000-kg payload) ballistic missiles.<sup>100</sup> This development was extremely significant for Indian civil-military relations, as civilians were taking specific measures to assign the military an appropriate role in nuclear affairs. Amidst such instances of civil-military collaboration on nuclear policy, New Delhi decided to conduct a second set of nuclear tests in 1998. But despite ongoing political debate about the military's role in nuclear affairs from the early 1990s, the decision to conduct nuclear tests in 1998 was made by civilians and scientists at the exclusion of the Indian military! Following a historical tradition of keeping the military subservient to civilian control, Indian political leaders appeared hesitant to seek the military's advice on the decision to test nuclear weapons. However, India's declared nuclear weapons status made it even more difficult for civilians to exclude the military from future decisions on nuclear strategy.

One of the major challenges for civilians in the immediate post-1998 nuclear environment was thinking about the allocation of military responsibilities in nuclear decisions. A growing debate was emerging in political, military, and academic circles about the effects of India's declared nuclear weapons status on the military. Most scholars agreed that a declared nuclear weapons posture would make it necessary to include the military in future nuclear decisions. A senior official from the Indian navy noted that India's overt nuclearization would bring civilians and the military closer, as the military had expressed a desire for adequate preparation time in a possible nuclear war with Pakistan.<sup>101</sup> Former Indian ambassador to the United Nations, Arundhati Ghose, also recalls that "post 1998, civilians had brought the military much closer into the decision-making process."<sup>102</sup> But debates concerning the Indian military's role in nuclear policy became even more visible after Pakistan also conducted nuclear tests in 1998 and launched a military attack on India in the summer of 1999.



## **Political Recommendations in Favor of Military Professionalism**

The Indian nuclear tests of 1998 were immediately followed by Pakistani nuclear tests. A year after both countries became overt nuclear states, Pakistan attacked India in what became known as the Kargil war to test the Indian military's conventional strength. Pakistan's declared nuclear weapons capability, and the short duration within which it tried to test India's nuclear threshold, made the threat of a nuclear confrontation between the countries very real. While both countries avoided a nuclear confrontation, the end of the Kargil war witnessed the creation of several proposals that supported an expansion in the Indian military's war-fighting methods. A few of these proposals also addressed the Indian military's growing importance in nuclear policy.

The Kargil war was Pakistan's attempt to avenge its military reverses suffered during the 1971 war and the Siachen dispute with India. The operational planning for the Kargil war had begun soon after Gen Pervez Musharraf took over as chief of army staff in October 1998.<sup>103</sup> Islamabad used the war to achieve three fundamental aims. First, the war provided Pakistan with an opportunity to internationalize the Kashmir issue.<sup>104</sup> Second, Kargil was Pakistan's attempt to push infiltrators across Indian borders to keep cross-border terrorism alive. As Pakistan's extremist activities had been thwarted by the Indian army in the past, Islamabad wanted to reverse that trend. Finally, Pakistan initiated the conflict to test Indian military capability in the wake of the 1998 nuclear tests.<sup>105</sup> By launching a surprise attack on India, Pakistani political leaders believed that if the Indian military could push back Pakistani forces despite facing an element of surprise, then India could defeat Pakistan anywhere.<sup>106</sup>

The war, code-named Operation Vijay, was marked by three phases. The initial phase began in early May 1999, during which Indian soldiers suffered heavy casualties and most Indian military operations failed until the introduction of airpower. On receiving reliable information on the location of intruders along the Drass-Batalik-Kaksar heights, the air force was called in to launch air strikes on Pakistani positions. During the second phase of the war, the Indian army consolidated its positions, cleared the Drass heights, and launched a systematic campaign to evict the intruders. Following the Indian army's capture of the Tololing peak on 13 June 1999, the armed forces held an advantageous position vis-à-vis Pakistan. The third and final phase of the war was characterized by significant military

victories on the Indian side. The Indian army captured vital positions, such as Tiger Hills, and successfully evicted intruders from the Mushkok, Kaksar, and Turtuk sectors in Jammu and Kashmir. In the final stages of the war, Pakistan's misadventure was stalled by speedy American intervention. In May 1999 US secretary of state Madeleine Albright and British foreign secretary Robin Cook met with India's external affairs minister, Jaswant Singh. The UN secretary general, Kofi Annan, also held discussions with Indian and Pakistani envoys. The scenario began to improve steadily amidst frequent diplomatic activity. Hostilities ceased by early July when Pres. Bill Clinton sent the Indian and Pakistani prime ministers an official letter urging them to respect the Line of Control in Kashmir.

As the Kargil war was fought in the shadow of nuclear weapons, Indian political leaders exercised a great deal of caution in preventing the war from escalating to the nuclear level. During the course of the war, civilians made all the strategic and political decisions, while the Indian army and air force enjoyed significant autonomy in tactical operations.<sup>107</sup> More importantly, Indian political leaders worked together with the military in fighting. Gen V. P. Malik observed that after the Cabinet Committee on Security met on 25 May, "the three chiefs were closely enmeshed in the political-military decision-making process." The decision-making process was "open and direct" and "after discussions, the concerned executive authorities, including the three chiefs, received directions from the prime minister and the national security advisor, Brajesh Mishra."<sup>108</sup> In a changed nuclear environment, there emerged "an integrated approach to war management with the political, economic, media, and military aspects enmeshed together cogently."<sup>109</sup> The presence of nuclear weapons had also made the military less bashful in advising political leaders about the consequences of using airpower against Pakistan. For instance, at a public press conference in Srinagar, when Air Chief Marshal A. Y. Tipnis was asked about the utility of an air offensive, he stated that consequences of the restricted use of airpower had been made clear to the government. Such instances of civil-military collaboration on military strategy were common during the Kargil war.

The end of the Kargil war raised fundamental questions about Indian defense preparedness in a nuclear environment. In the immediate postwar period, a committee was set up to evaluate the successes and failures of the war. Their report is popularly known as the *Kargil Review Committee Report* (also called the *Subrahmanyam Report*, after its primary architect,

K. Subrahmanyam).<sup>110</sup> In explaining the lessons of the Kargil war, the committee highlighted critical lapses in India's intelligence system and structural problems in its higher defense organization. But more importantly, the Kargil report made serious recommendations supporting the Indian military's professional role in nuclear policy.

Prior to highlighting that role, the committee suggested a serious re-organization of India's higher defense system to allow for greater military involvement. The need to set up a national defense headquarters and a defense intelligence agency and to create the post of national security adviser was strongly emphasized. The committee further suggested that "members of the National Security Council, the senior bureaucracy servicing it and the Service Chiefs had to be continually sensitized to intelligence pertaining to national, regional and international issues." Proposals outlining changes in India's institutional structure of civil-military were meant to generate greater synergy between civilian and military branches and also to provide the military with a large range of options in grand strategy. The report also underscored problems in coordinating different intelligence operations within India. The committee observed that "the present structure and processes in intelligence gathering and reporting" had led to "an overload of background and unconfirmed information and inadequately assessed intelligence."<sup>111</sup> There was an absence of an institutionalized process which could allow different intelligence agencies, such as the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), Intelligence Bureau (IB), and Border Security Forces (BSF), to interact periodically below the level of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC). While the JIC was doing its job as the chief custodian of intelligence, subsidiary organizations like the RAW and IB were not doing as thorough a job. A sharp disconnect between various intelligence agencies had led to faulty intelligence reports during the Kargil war. For instance, as early as 1998, the RAW had detected the presence of one additional Pakistani unit in Gultari but had failed to follow up on the lead through aerial reconnaissance flights. Moreover, as the Indian military had no shared system for exchanging intelligence information with agencies such as the JIC and RAW, the armed forces could do very little to report Pakistan's initial incursions.<sup>112</sup> As a result of these problems, an immediate upgrade in India's intelligence services was considered crucial.

With regard to the Indian military's professional role in nuclear strategy, the *Kargil Report* made a critical recommendation. It suggested that the military had to be made as well informed as its Pakistani counterpart on

nuclear policy. Committee members noted that during the Kargil war, Pakistani political leaders had been thinking very clearly about the role of nuclear weapons. The clarity in Pakistani political thought about the role of nuclear weapons was a result of strategic decisions being taken jointly by both civilians and the military. In India the military's exclusion from nuclear policy for several decades had left it at a more disadvantaged position. Senior Indian military officers had alerted the committee to contradictory approaches taken by civilians on nuclear policy. Air Chief Marshal Mehra had observed that even though flight trials for the delivery of Indian nuclear weapons were conducted in 1990 and several political leaders from V. P. Singh to Rajiv Gandhi had sustained a nuclear weapons program, most Indian prime ministers had tried to keep the program confidential.<sup>113</sup> Again, while civilians had routinely reassured the Indian public that the country's nuclear weapons option would remain open if Pakistan developed nuclear weapons, they had said very little about what a functional nuclear weapons program would entail. In sharp contrast to the political indecisiveness displayed by Indian leaders, several Pakistani political and military leaders, such as Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif, and chief of army staff Gen Aslam Beg, had openly shared information with the public about Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability.

Highlighting the problems in excluding the military from nuclear policy, the *Kargil Report* also noted that "the nuclear posture adopted by successive prime ministers had put the Indian army at a disadvantage vis-à-vis its Pakistani counterpart. While the former was in the dark about India's nuclear capability, the latter as the custodian of Pakistani nuclear weaponry was fully aware of its own capability. Three former chiefs of army staff had expressed unhappiness about this asymmetric situation." Moreover, the lack of an open dialogue between civilians and the military on nuclear strategy had the potential of harming the Indian military's position in the management of nuclear weapons in the future. At the end of the Kargil war, disturbed by the political neglect of its role in the management of nuclear weapons, the Indian military had expressed its dissatisfaction for not being included in the nuclear decision-making loop. And so, to facilitate greater transparency in civil-military relations on nuclear strategy, the *Kargil Report* suggested the publication of a white paper on India's nuclear weapons program.<sup>114</sup>

Besides recommending the integration of the Indian armed forces in nuclear decisions, the Kargil Committee contained proposals for enhanc-

ing the military's professional role in counterinsurgency operations. Members of the committee alerted the government to the inherent defects of using the military as a police force in such operations. In its recommendations, the committee noted that heavy involvement of the Indian army in counterinsurgency operations had affected its military preparedness in defending the country against external aggression. The committee further noted that such a situation had arisen because successive governments had not developed a long-term strategy to deal with insurgency. Members of the committee feared that the military's prolonged deployment in counterinsurgency operations would not only impede its training program in the future but could also lead to a military mind-set that detracted from its primary function of fighting wars. The Ministry of Home Affairs, state governments, and paramilitary forces had also frequently assumed that "the military would always be available to combat insurgency."<sup>115</sup> In addition, law enforcement agencies such as the Indian Paramilitary and Central Police Forces had not been adequately trained to deal with counterinsurgency operations. This led to an increased dependence on the military and "transformed it into an ordinary police force."<sup>116</sup> The *Kargil Report* suggested that to strengthen the military's professional role, civilians would need to use the military in fighting conventional wars only.

The Kargil Committee's recommendations outlining a professional role for the Indian military in future wars with Pakistan were an important development in Indian civil-military relations. But just as India's political leadership began to follow through with the committee's recommendations, Pakistani terrorists launched a second attack on India in 2001–02, threatening the outbreak of yet another nuclear crisis in the subcontinent.

### **The Military's Critique of Political Objectives in a Conflict with Pakistan**

On 13 December 2001, six individuals affiliated with a Pakistani militant organization, *Lashkar-e-Taiba*, attacked the Indian Parliament. The ensuing battle between assailants and Indian security forces claimed the lives of all six attackers and eight members of the Indian security forces. To prevent Pakistan from waging future attacks of a similar kind, the Indian military undertook a large-scale mobilization of its troops along the LOC. The Indian military response to Pakistan's brazen attack is popularly known as Operation Parakram.<sup>117</sup> In response to the buildup of Indian military

forces along the LOC, Pakistan announced to the world that its medium-range nuclear missiles were on high alert. As the situation contained the possibility of a nuclear crisis between India and Pakistan, American officials intervened to alleviate Indian fears of a Pakistani nuclear strike. But despite American intervention, New Delhi maintained a deployed state of readiness along its borders, claiming that Pakistan had done little to eradicate militancy in the subcontinent. The Indian military also remained resolute in its strategy against Pakistan. Chief of army staff, General Padmanabhan, noted that “any country that was mad enough to initiate a nuclear strike against India would be punished severely.”<sup>118</sup> Despite Pakistani president Gen Pervez Musharraf’s assurances to end militancy, New Delhi maintained a posture of force and even went to the extent of testing a missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead.<sup>119</sup> On 14 May 2002, Pakistan launched a second set of attacks on an Indian army base in Kaluchek, Jammu and Kashmir. This attack killed over 30 innocent civilians. To make matters worse, a prominent Kashmiri separatist leader, Abdul Ghani Lone, was assassinated. By the end of May 2002, war appeared imminent, and Indian troop deployments were strengthened along the border. The United States exerted diplomatic pressure on both India and Pakistan to end hostilities. By June 2002, there was a reduction in hostilities, and by October 2002, the crisis was finally over.

India’s military encounter with Pakistan in 2001–02 had significant ramifications for civil-military relations. The crisis generated robust military responses from the Indian army. More importantly, during the crisis, the Indian military had become disappointed with political objectives. The Indian armed forces believed that there was a complete mismatch between strategic and tactical goals. The military underlined three basic problems with political decisions during the crisis. First, they disagreed with civilians over adopting a defensive military posture against Pakistan. Second, New Delhi’s indefinite stance on war objectives had significantly undermined Indian military operations.<sup>120</sup> And, third, they were unhappy with civilians for blaming the Indian armed forces for a slow response in fighting the militants.

Defending the military’s position, chief of army staff, General Padmanabhan noted that the Indian military’s slow response during the crisis was a direct result of civilian indecisiveness rather than military unpreparedness. Reporting on poor civilian directions during the crisis, Padmanabhan argued that “significant military gains could have been achieved in January

2002 had politicians made the decision to go to war.” These objectives, he says, could have included “degradation of the other force, and perhaps the capture of disputed territory in Jammu and Kashmir. They were more achievable in January, less achievable in February, and even less achievable in March. By then, the balance of forces had gradually changed.” Also, when Pakistan launched its attack on the Indian Parliament, the Indian army’s strike formations were in garrison and very little could have been done to mobilize large military forces across the LOC. General Padmanabhan argued that political strategies against Pakistan were faulty, as the type of limited strikes civilians were pushing for would have been “totally futile.” Addressing the military’s hesitancy in applying limited war objectives, Padmanabhan stated that “if you really want to punish someone for something very terrible he has done, you smash him. You destroy his weapons and capture his territory. War is a serious business and you don’t go in just like that.”<sup>121</sup>

General Padmanabhan’s criticism of civilian strategy during the crisis and similar sentiments expressed by serving and retired officers suggest that the biggest challenge for the Indian military was that India’s political leadership had no clear plan on how to respond to a terrorist attack from Pakistan. Civilians did not clearly understand the range of military options available or their potential consequences. On the military side, the crisis highlighted the need for a military doctrine, which could go beyond just fighting a limited war. Pakistan’s brazen and unpredictable attack on India had proven that a defense-oriented approach towards the enemy would be an ineffective military strategy in the long run. The Indian military was also concerned about the human cost of war. Political directives had resulted in a large number of military deaths. The Indian army had lost more men in Operation Parakram than in the Kargil conflict. During Operation Vijay (code name for the Kargil war), 527 soldiers lost their lives. During Operation Parakram, more than 680 were killed.<sup>122</sup> Over 100 soldiers died while laying nearly a million mines near the border, and as many as 110 soldiers died in road accidents. Despite such alarming statistics, the Indian government was unwilling to concede the extent of casualties. In fact, the government had projected the military operation as bloodless, even though casualty figures suggested that the conflict had a human cost.<sup>123</sup>

Padmanabhan’s criticisms of political objectives during the 2001–02 crisis were a way of asserting the military’s expertise in adopting a more

suitable military strategy against Pakistan. The significance of military expertise can be understood by looking at recent events in American civil-military relations in the war on Iraq. Until recently, serving officers in the US military had been cautious in criticizing the Bush administration's military policies in Iraq. But as the situation worsened, with mounting casualties on the American side, serving and retired generals began to discuss war objectives more openly. On 12 October 2006, the media reported that the former commander in Iraq, retired general Ricardo Sanchez, criticized the Bush administration's Iraq policy, calling it a "nightmare."<sup>124</sup> The US military's criticism of political objectives in the Iraq war further intensified after General Petraeus' testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee in 2007. In his testimony, Petraeus described some of the major problems facing the US military in Iraq and expressed disappointment in the lack of progress toward political reconciliation there. In a letter addressed to his troops, Petraeus emphasized that although violence has diminished, "it has not worked out as we had hoped."<sup>125</sup>

A careful reading of military responses to political objectives in India and the United States suggests that the biggest concern for any professional military is to find appropriate methods that can match military objectives to political decisions. Civilian policies that do not reflect military objectives adequately tend to compromise the military's professional expertise. Unless civilians can find ways to match military objectives with strategic policy, the military will continue to remain critical of civilian policies. And, in an effort to introduce favorable civilian approaches to military strategy, the military uses a crisis or war to criticize political decisions publicly. By doing this, it tries to transform civilian policy without overtly challenging civilian orders. The 2001–02 India-Pakistan crisis revealed to the Indian military the ineffectiveness of pursuing limited-war objectives against Pakistan. In thinking about military responses to deal with a nuclear Pakistan, the Indian armed forces began taking a leading role in formulating new strategic doctrines, which would privilege an offensive military strategy against Pakistan in future crises.

### **The Indian Military's Role in the Development of Strategic Doctrines**

The Indian military's push for new strategic doctrines has to be understood in the light of certain events in Indian civil-military relations. On



24 January 2000, in an inaugural address to the Second International Conference on Asian Security in the 21st Century, Indian defense minister George Fernandes introduced the Limited War Doctrine. Fernandes declared that the Kargil war was proof of India's ability to fight and win a limited war at a time and place chosen by the aggressor.<sup>126</sup> While the main tenets of a limited-war doctrine remained unclear, Fernandes' statements had generated further thinking in strategic and military circles about the impact of nuclear weapons on conventional wars. Questions about the manner in which Indian military doctrines had to be tailored to deal with low-intensity conflicts and the Indian military's role in such operations attained an important place in Indian strategic debates. As Swaran Singh notes, the creation of a limited-war doctrine required sophisticated force structures that could address the entire gamut of contingencies, ranging from a controlled nuclear war to maintaining civil defense awareness in suspected target locations. And to deal with various types of aggression—nuclear, conventional, military, and subconventional—the Indian army would have to develop better war-fighting techniques.<sup>127</sup>

At the end of the Kargil war, India's political leadership produced a formal nuclear doctrine, which discussed the major features of its nuclear capabilities.<sup>128</sup> The doctrine was not very detailed but did contain some essential features. It enumerated a policy of minimum nuclear deterrence and no-first-use. The nuclear command and control system would consist of a mix of land-based, maritime, and air capabilities. Additional guidelines published in 2003 indicated that nuclear weapons could be used to deter or retaliate against the use of biological or chemical weapons.<sup>129</sup> While the doctrine established a framework for Indian nuclear policy, most scholars seem to agree that it was rather minimalist. In other words, sections of the doctrine were ambiguous, and there was no detailed analysis of how civilians and the military would work together on nuclear decisions. Even though the nuclear doctrine lacked explicit references about the role of the military in future nuclear operations, civilian attempts to set up a command and control system marked a crucial step forward in the military's inclusion in nuclear strategy. Discussing the importance of the Indian military in nuclear operations, Arundhati Ghose remarked that "even on the definition of 'minimum' credible deterrent, civilians would need the military to come into the picture. Also, the military would insist on missiles being tested before they were willing to absorb such weapons

into their arsenal. Hence, the real change in civil-military relations was on the nuclear side.”<sup>130</sup>

For the military, the publication of an Indian nuclear doctrine demanded some serious thinking about deterrence strategies against Pakistan. Interestingly, the India-Pakistan conflicts of 1999 and 2002 had confirmed that the presence of nuclear weapons was making it harder to achieve political and military stability in the subcontinent. The Kargil war had demonstrated the failure of deterrence at the level of low-intensity conflicts because the presence of nuclear weapons had encouraged conflict below the level of nuclear and conventional confrontation.<sup>131</sup> While the existence of nuclear weapons had prevented total war, stability had been undermined by the possibility of subconventional conflicts or proxy wars.<sup>132</sup> Some Indian experts also argued that post-weaponization military stability had not been assured in South Asia, because the presence of nuclear weapons had created possible scenarios for miscalculation and misperception of enemy responses.<sup>133</sup> And so, India's declared nuclear weapons status had created conditions for greater civil-military collaboration in keeping future military operations at the low-intensity level.<sup>134</sup> When asked about the effect of nuclear weapons on Indian civil-military relations, Gen V. R. Raghavan noted that “India's no-first-use doctrine would deter civilians from using these weapons in conflicts with Pakistan but this does not mean that the military had not thought seriously enough about fighting with nuclear weapons.”<sup>135</sup> Raghavan's statement suggests that in the aftermath of India's overt nuclearization and subsequent conflicts with Pakistan, the importance of structured thinking in conducting future wars with Pakistan had become extremely critical. And more importantly, the Indian military was emerging as an important player in nuclear strategy.

The turn of the century witnessed the Indian military's growing influence on creating sophisticated doctrines in a war with Pakistan. The 2001–02 encounters with Pakistan had left the armed forces extremely skeptical of limited-war objectives. The end of the crisis witnessed the Indian military's efforts in developing doctrines which would be a more appropriate fit against a nuclear Pakistan. Accordingly, on 28 April 2004, the Indian army officially introduced the Cold Start Doctrine. This new doctrine called for a “rapid deployment of integrated battle groups to conduct high-intensity offensive operations.”<sup>136</sup> The doctrine was the brainchild of senior military officers, such as General Padmanabhan, who wanted the Indian military to adopt a blitzkrieg-like strategy in future operations that included all three services.

While details of this doctrine remain classified, such doctrines had been used in NATO operations and included integrated groups in offensive military operations at the highest levels.<sup>137</sup> As part of this new strategy, the Indian military would have to undertake offensive military operations at the very outset of hostilities, short of a nuclear war. The objective of such a strategy was to prevent Pakistan or any other hostile South Asian state from counting on intervention by their external allies. Battle groups at various levels would be “task oriented in terms of varying composition of armor and infantry elements with integrated attack helicopters of the Army Aviation and the Air Force having close support from ground-attack Air Force squadrons.”<sup>138</sup> Battle groups could be used individually for limited operations or in conjunction with operations on a larger scale.

The Cold Start Doctrine was certainly different from previous Indian military doctrines, as “a decisive military victory was no longer held as the only goal of any war against Pakistan.” The purpose of this doctrine “was to increase the range of options available to India for fighting and winning a war against Pakistan by moving away from an all-or-nothing strategy.”<sup>139</sup> The Indian military’s preference for an offensive posture also implied that military intervention or preemptive strikes would now be considered legitimate options in South Asia.<sup>140</sup> To determine the effectiveness of this new strategy, the Indian army tested the Cold Start Doctrine in various military exercises. In early May 2005, the Indian army conducted an exercise called Vajra Shakti. This exercise involved the use of an infantry division and an independent mechanized brigade of II Corps, along with associated armored elements integral to the corps, to initiate offensive strikes at the outbreak of future hostilities. A year after conducting this military exercise, the Indian army retested its Cold Start Doctrine in the summer of 2006. The second military exercise, code-named Sanghe-Shakti, not only tested the feasibility of the new doctrine but also the military’s capacity to respond to a nuclear, biological, or chemical attack. Twenty thousand troops together with the Indian air force concluded the week-long exercise approximately 100 kilometers from the Indian border. At the end of the exercise, Lt Gen Daulat Shekhawat, commander of the elite II Corps (one of three key strike formations of the Indian army), reported that there was room for a swift strike in case of a nuclear attack from Pakistan and that the exercise had validated the new military doctrine.<sup>141</sup> Senior military officials, including chief of army staff Gen J. J. Singh, were jubilant at the integration which had been achieved between ground troops and

the air force through the conduct of this exercise. Exercise Sanghe-Shakti appeared to have achieved its objective of making all three services work together in the fulfillment of a doctrine that required a “quick response” against the enemy.

Interestingly, the impact of new strategic doctrines on Indian civil-military relations has been largely ignored in Indian literature on the subject. Few Indian observers have paid attention to the implication of such new doctrines for civil-military relations. While some scholars have discussed the significance of the Cold Start Doctrine in terms of Indian responses to a Pakistani attack on India, other observers have focused on the merits of using a defense-oriented corps (better known as “Pivot Corps”) to launch offensive operations into enemy territory—a technique which, they argue, can be successfully employed by other strike formations.<sup>142</sup> Yet, no one has tried to clarify what an offensive military strategy would mean for Indian civil-military relations.

The creation of the Cold Start Doctrine undoubtedly carries significant implications for Indian civil-military relations. First, a military doctrine which gives primacy to an offensive strategy reflects the military's desire to disassociate itself from defensive military strategies used in the past. Scholars argue that for several decades, the Indian military had subscribed to a defensive war strategy at the behest of political directives. India's political leadership had always displayed a lack of political will in developing military power in accordance with the country's national security interests.<sup>143</sup> By developing new doctrines, the military was not only trying to break away from antiquated military strategies but was also displaying the seriousness in taking effective steps against any future attacks from Pakistan. Underlining the importance of the military's role in developing such new doctrines, Indian nuclear expert and member of the NSAB, Bharat Karnad, notes that “it is only now that the military is getting into nuclear matters.” This is an exciting time in Indian civil-military relations as the “military is trying to define a role for itself. . . . From the 1990s, the Indian army had talked about the space for conventional war in a nuclear environment. And if the military was going to start a conventional war, the Cold Start Doctrine was a way of telling the government to start thinking beforehand.”<sup>144</sup> Indeed, the military's attempt to develop new doctrines was a way of asserting their professional judgment and expertise in strategic affairs.

A second implication of the push for new strategic doctrines is the shift from a clear separation in civil-military responsibilities to a convergence

in civil-military functions. Charles Moskos noted that a convergence in civil-military functions is often the direct consequence of changes induced by sophisticated weapons systems. The American experience with nuclear technology indicates that the presence of nuclear weapons gave rise “not just to a need for technical proficiency but also for men trained in modern and managerial skills.”<sup>145</sup> As the United States developed a sophisticated nuclear weapons arsenal, the military began playing a major role in the management of such weapons. Moreover, the possible use of nuclear weapons in a war with the Soviet Union introduced fundamental changes in the nature of US warfare. Various strategic doctrines began to be built around deterrence theory. While nuclear capability was the bedrock of deterrence strategies, “to be effective, the American military had to exhibit a capability and credibility in pursuing policies other than nuclear war.” The need to make the threat of a nuclear war credible consequently introduced a complex dynamic in US civil-military relations as American political leaders had to work together with the military in the fulfillment of political objectives.<sup>146</sup> More importantly, besides fighting a nuclear war, an effective deterrence strategy also required the US military to be trained in a variety of nonnuclear conflicts that demanded further civil-military collaboration. Thus, in the United States, the presence of nuclear weapons produced a convergence in civil-military functions and raised serious questions about the blurring in the division of labor between civil-military domains.

In the Indian case, military encounters with Pakistan from the 1980s had always contained a possibility for escalation to the nuclear level. By the late 1990s, new military doctrines which could include the strategic use of nuclear weapons in a war with Pakistan had become extremely critical. But, the introduction of new strategic doctrines also required a more careful review of civil-military objectives. Offensive military doctrines demand a structured and speedy political decision-making process with sophisticated crisis-management procedures so that military operations remain unrestricted and the element of surprise, vital to such doctrines, is not lost.<sup>147</sup> Accordingly, in any future war or crisis, the Indian army’s offensive operations would require regular and unrestricted civil-military collaboration on collection, collation, and assessment of enemy information. This, of course, will integrate the military more deeply into the political decision-making process. Instead of working separately, the military can help civilians execute a successful offensive strategy.

As the American case demonstrates, the possibility for a convergence in civil-military functions significantly undermines the division of labor between civilians and the military. The success of the Indian military in the development of new doctrines in the future will depend on the Indian political leadership's willingness to accept such new doctrines. For civilians, the introduction of offense-oriented military doctrines could very well open up possibilities for a reduction in the effectiveness of civilian control. Given the "quick response time" needed as part of this strategy, combat commanders would have to exercise far greater freedom for independent initiative than would be deemed acceptable by the civilians.<sup>148</sup> More importantly, to make the new doctrine functional without compromising civilian control, there would be a greater need to develop institutions which support a rapid response doctrine. India's command and control system would also have to be sophisticated enough to withstand an increase in decision-making activity generated by the nature of intense combat operations. The biggest challenge for civilians in accepting new military doctrines is the likelihood of a convergence in civil-military functions. As long as there exists a possibility for future wars with Pakistan in the shadow of nuclear weapons, a clear separation in civil-military functions might be impossible to achieve. ❧

## Notes

1. Raju G. C. Thomas, "Indian Defense Policy: Continuity and Change under the Janata Government," *Pacific Affairs* 53, no. 2 (Summer 1980): 225.
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# India's Military Aviation Market

## Opportunities for the United States

*Amit Gupta*

WHAT ARE India's future aviation requirements and what political, military, and economic opportunities do they present to the United States? Three factors are important in understanding these two phenomena:

- Indian policy makers are beginning to think in terms of projecting power extra-regionally and, therefore, are investing in the weapons systems necessary to achieve this objective.
- The US-India relationship is changing, and the transfer of technology is becoming a central part of the transformed relationship.
- India's economy is shifting from a Soviet-style command economy to a modern economy, and this is starting to impact on the procurement and development of weapons systems.

In this context, examining the Indian aviation market provides a better understanding of what are the opportunities and challenges in the broader US-India strategic relationship.

### Background

As India moves toward becoming an extra-regional power, it has begun putting more muscle into its military aviation. Indian security interests require power projection beyond South Asia and into the Indian Ocean littoral and Central Asia. Further, Indian analysts view China as a long-term security concern and, therefore, see the need to develop a robust deterrent against that country; this requires enhancing both the conventional and the nuclear capabilities of India's armed forces. Logically, airpower becomes an integral part in developing an extra-regional capability. Coupled with this development is

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a recognition of the changing nature of warfare. The Indian armed forces were loath to use airpower as part of their counterinsurgency strategy, for reasons discussed below. Recently, however, they have begun to shift from this position and seek to build a counterinsurgency air capability.

To create this extra-regional capability, the Indian armed forces are modernizing the air components of each service. The Indian air force (IAF) has added air refueling tankers and an airborne early warning (AEW) system to its fleet. When coupled with the long-range Su-30 multipurpose fighter, the force is emerging with a significant capability in the Indian Ocean region. Indian naval aviation is expected to be enhanced by the acquisition of the *Admiral Gorshkov* carrier, which will permit the Indian navy to have a more effective air capability. The Indian army is also seeking to build up its own air arm. Additionally, India requires new light and medium helicopters, a medium-range combat aircraft, new reconnaissance planes, and an advanced AEW capability. What we have, therefore, is a large Indian military aviation market waiting to be tapped by every major arms producer in the world.

The requirements for new weapons systems are taking place within the context of the political and economic shifts that have come about in India in the past decade. India's market reforms have started to slowly dismantle a Victorian-era bureaucracy and a Soviet-style command economy. Politically, India has moved towards a more positive relationship with the United States—one that has opened the possibility for increased military cooperation between the two countries.

Until recently, the bulk of Indian aircraft procurements were from Russia (or the erstwhile Soviet Union), but now the Indians are seeking to move towards a more diversified procurement strategy. This creates a major opportunity for the United States to sell weaponry to India, thus not only cementing the emerging strategic relationship with the country, but also bringing lucrative business for American arms companies. Getting India's business, however, requires thinking proactively and understanding what the Indian market wants, what makes the Indians suspicious about the United States, and how the United States can help the Indians think about what their future threat environment will be like.

## **The Development of Indian Airpower: Rationale, Acquisition, and Production Trends**

The development of Indian airpower—both land-based and maritime—was based on the Indian leadership's nationalistic vision and on the supply and resource constraints that the country faced in the attempt to build up its military capability. India's national leadership decided in the 1950s to build a domestic aviation industry from scratch. Thus, the Indian government decided to design and develop a primary piston-engine trainer, a subsonic jet trainer, and a supersonic fighter. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, wanted India to become one of the most technologically advanced countries in the world, and this included the development of a modern arms industry.<sup>1</sup>

Early Indian efforts to domestically produce aircraft led to mixed results. The piston-engine trainer and the jet trainer were put into service but only after developmental and production delays. This led India to procure emergency batches of TS-11 Iskra trainers from Poland. The supersonic jet fighter (the HF-24 Marut) was put into service in 1964 after considerable delay but never reached supersonic speed and was technically obsolete by the time it finally entered service.<sup>2</sup> The program was eventually abandoned in the 1970s when an attempt to put an afterburner on the plane ended in a fatal crash.

The reasons for this dismal performance lay in resource, technological, personnel, and bureaucratic constraints. India was a developing country seeking to build advanced fighter planes at a time when it lacked the experienced personnel, the industrial infrastructure, and even the basic machine tools to successfully carry out such a program. Further, the Indian government was loath to provide scarce resources for bringing such programs to fruition, depending instead on domestic industry to deliver the goods. The Indian government thus refused to pay Bristol Aero Engines the fees it required to develop the Marut's proposed engine to supersonic capability. Instead, driven by cost constraints and political agendas, the government sought to unsuccessfully collaborate with the Egyptian Helwan fighter project.

Bureaucratic constraints also affected the procurement process. The Indian armed forces viewed themselves as a professional fighting force, based on British traditions and operating within a globalized military environment. They based their requirements, therefore, on what was considered state of the art in the field of military aircraft and imposed these standards on the domestic arms industry. So instead of asking the

domestic aviation industry to build what was technologically feasible, they instead set impossible standards by asking for what was militarily desirable. Not surprisingly, the domestic aviation industry could not deliver an acceptable product.

Finally, India's defense scientists have been prone to seeking technologically ambitious as opposed to technologically feasible projects. This was seen in the 1980s when the Indian government decided to sanction the development of a light combat aircraft (LCA)—essentially a lightweight supersonic fighter to replace the IAF's aging MiG-21 workhorse.<sup>3</sup> The Indian arms industry had not successfully built a supersonic fighter, let alone an engine to power it, but was once again willing to take on the project. At the same time, the IAF was seeking an advanced jet trainer—a high-subsonic trainer with a weapons payload capability—and had entered into negotiations with British Aerospace for the Hawk. Building an advanced jet trainer would have been within the technological competence of the Indian arms industry but it, instead, chose to build the more complex LCA. Among the reasons given for this choice was that building the jet trainer would condemn India to “technological colonialism.” India, therefore, pursued the LCA with familiar results: cost overruns, lengthy delays, obsolescence, and the inability to meet pressing air force needs for fleet replacement.<sup>4</sup> The IAF eventually ended up buying the Hawk, after a 20-year delay, at the cost of \$5 billion to the Indian exchequer. The attitudes of the defense scientists have not changed, as they continue to demand projects that are beyond the current industrial base and technological capability of the country.

Coupled with the constraints posed by the domestic arms production and acquisition requirements were problems of suppliers and resources. As a developing nation, India's arms-procurement efforts were determined by the availability of suppliers and resources. When resources—hard currency—were available, India was able to buy aircraft from the West, most notably the United Kingdom and France. When hard currency was unavailable, it had to depend on the Soviet Union, where it was able to make purchases in Indian rupees. This led to India getting planes that did not necessarily fit its requirements or the quality that the IAF desired. India was denied the Su-24 Fencer by the Soviet Union and instead had to make do with the less-capable MiG-23BN Flogger. Spares were also a constant problem, as the Soviet Union and its successor state, Russia, were tardy in supplying them.



Even though the Cold War ended and the US-India relationship improved through the 1990s, deep-rooted suspicions remained in military and political circles alike in India about the trustworthiness of the United States as a weapons supplier. Critics liked to point out that the United States hit India with arms embargos in both the 1965 and 1971 India-Pakistan wars (although the sanctions were far more damaging to Pakistan, which was heavily dependent on US weaponry, while India had diversified its procurement), that the USS *Enterprise* was sent to the Bay of Bengal in 1971 to pressure India to halt the Bangladesh campaign, and that after the 1998 nuclear tests, India was once again a victim of US sanctions that led to significant delays in the LCA program, amongst other projects. Even now, despite significant changes in the relationship, some Indian political groups—notably the communist parties—are averse to a significant strategic partnership with the United States.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, US arms manufacturers did not grasp the importance of the Indian aerospace market until recently, and consequently, did not have a permanent presence in India. In contrast, the Russians, the French, the British, and even the Israelis had established permanent offices in India. In the last couple of years, however, the situation has changed as India's willingness to buy American weapons systems and the boom in Indian civil aviation have made it vital for companies like Boeing and Lockheed to set up shop in New Delhi.

### **Continuing Trends in Acquisition**

The history of India's acquisition and production of weapons has left behind several trends that are likely to continue into the near future. One of these is the existence of a large defense production public sector that employs thousands of people. At the apex of this public sector pyramid is India's defense science base. Traditionally, defense scientists have commanded considerable political influence since, as discussed earlier, succeeding Indian governments have recognized the prestige that comes from indigenous weapons-production projects—especially in the aeronautical, space, and nuclear spheres—as well as the potential autonomy that an indigenous weapons-production capability provides. At the same time, most of India's indigenous defense projects have met with lengthy delays, cost overruns, and, when they do come to fruition, the tendency of the user

service to decline large-scale purchases because of quality questions—the Indian army recently decided to discontinue buying the Arjun main battle tank because it wanted to move on to a state-of-the-art tank.<sup>6</sup> Yet the Arjun spent 30 years in development and was meant to satisfy the army's requirements well into the current century.

As a consequence, India will continue to provide projects to keep its defense science base employed and ensure that its public sector companies continue to produce weapons systems. Any arms purchases that it makes, therefore, are likely to include offsets and licensed production of the weapons systems. At the same time, the poor completion and production records of the domestic arms industry will require collaborative ventures with foreign companies. India is now, for example, seeking a foreign partner to help develop the Kaveri engine for the Tejas, a power plant that has been in development for nearly three decades. Increasingly, there will be pressure to have joint development of products. In recent years India has codeveloped the Brahmos supersonic cruise missile with Russia and is seeking to jointly develop a medium-range transport aircraft as well as a fifth-generation combat aircraft with the Russians. As argued later, one step for prospective sellers may be to join such programs at the conceptual planning phase and provide critical inputs on engines, avionics, and electronics.

The other piece of historical baggage comes from the series of embargos that were placed on India during its wars with Pakistan and following its nuclear weapons tests in 1974 and 1998. These sanctions hurt the Pakistani war effort more than India's since Pakistan's arsenal was mainly of American origin while India's was a mix of Soviet and European weapons systems. India, however, viewed the embargos as an attempt at coercion, and this engendered suspicion about US motives. Matters worsened after the 1974 nuclear tests because of the technology cut-offs that set back the Indian civilian nuclear program. Residual suspicion remains in India about US motives and, therefore, there is the concern that any significant military purchases from the United States would leave India vulnerable to sanctions and coercive diplomacy in a future conflict. Eradicating this fear will be a difficult hurdle for American policy makers and aeronautical companies.

Continuing suspicion about US intentions can be seen in the lengthy and heated public debate in India about the proposed joint nuclear deal. As part of the deal, India will separate its civilian and military nu-

clear facilities and put the former under IAEA safeguards. Part of the opposition to the deal stems from concerns that India will be losing its nuclear autonomy and giving the United States a crippling control over its nuclear weapons program. In addition, the Indian Left parties are concerned that the deal would take away the foreign policy maneuverability:

In the discussions on foreign policy and security matters, the Left has exposed the vital area of extraneous “nonnuclear” conditions inherent in the nuclear deal. The 40-year civilian nuclear agreement will put severe constraints on our independent foreign policy given the approach of the United States as reflected in the Hyde Act and the 123 Agreement. India is sought to be bound to the United States’ strategic designs through the nuclear deal.<sup>7</sup>

The Left’s opposition came despite the fact that the deal was going to remove some of the crippling sanctions that had constrained India’s civilian nuclear program.

A third historical hangover comes from the traditions of the various Indian armed services. Having British traditions and British-based military doctrines, moving to an American-style force structure, doctrine, and maintenance method will prove to be a difficult but not impossible jump for the Indian armed forces and, in real terms, may also be considered unnecessary. Achieving organizational and cultural change will, therefore, require a broader debate in Indian political and military circles (that is currently ongoing) to determine the exact nature of the modern military doctrine that India wishes to pursue.

What is clear, however, is that all three services of the Indian armed forces are seeking to augment their air components. The army and the navy are seeking helicopters, UAVs, and in the case of the army, even tactical refuelers. But the major purchaser of aerial weapons systems will be the IAF. To understand the role of Indian airpower in a strategic perspective, one needs to discuss the issue in *purple* (joint) terms—even though that may not actually exist in the Indian case.

## Airpower in Indian Strategy

The IAF’s doctrine was taken from the Royal Air Force, from which it was born in 1947. The British influence continued into the post-independence era, since the first Indian chief of the air force was appointed only in 1954. Consequently, IAF doctrine was focused on World War II–related mis-

sions like strategic bombing and interdiction, and the service sought to procure aircraft that could carry out these tasks.<sup>8</sup>

In the 1965 India-Pakistan war, this doctrine led the IAF to target Pakistani air bases and engage in interdiction efforts. These tactics met with limited success because Pakistan based its aircraft deep inside its territory; the IAF suffered unnecessary and considerable losses in trying to attack these targets.<sup>9</sup> India had no forward bases along the border with Pakistan, and this allowed Pakistani ground forces to penetrate the area without Indian aerial interference. Further, there was little coordination with the army or the navy to provide air defenses to their forces.

By the 1971 war, the then air chief, Pratap Chandra Lal, decided that the IAF's mission, in descending order of importance, would be to (1) defend the airspace of the country, (2) provide air support to the army and the navy, (3) undertake strategic bombing, and (4) carry out operations like paratrooping and transport.<sup>10</sup>

The next major use of Indian airpower took place with the Kargil war of 1999. The Indian army discovered in 1999 that Pakistani forces had placed troops on the Indian side of the Line of Control (LOC) in Kashmir. The dispute had a long history. In the 1980s India had taken over the disputed Siachen glacier in Kashmir and, in subsequent years, shelled the Pakistani supply lines in the Neelam Valley that were used to resupply the Pakistani troops that faced the Indian troops on the glacier. In the winter of 1998–99, Pakistan placed troops in the Kargil and Dras sectors of Kashmir from where they could put pressure on Highway 1A, India's main artery into northern Kashmir, thus cutting off Indian access to Siachen.<sup>11</sup>

The Indian army discovered the incursion in May 1999 and responded with an artillery and infantry assault on Pakistani positions. The IAF was brought in after a 20-day delay (which led to a subsequent heated debate in India on jointness in war fighting), and the IAF saw itself thrown into a very different type of limited war. The IAF was not permitted to cross the LOC to bomb Pakistani supply lines. At the same time, it faced a hostile combat environment that it was unprepared for. The high, snow-covered mountains made target acquisition difficult, and the Pakistani troops were well bunkered in and had been supplied with a range of shoulder-fired, surface-to-air weapons. The latter made it difficult to fly in at low levels and, given that the Pakistani troops were lodged at 14–18,000 feet, the slant range of the SAMs was as high as 30,000 feet.<sup>12</sup> Carrying out air opera-

tions, therefore, was fraught with difficulties. The IAF tried to improvise by using a GPS and a stopwatch to make its munitions drops accurately but eventually had to use precision-guided munitions (PGM) to successfully attack targets—however, according to one source, probably no more than a dozen PGMs were used.<sup>13</sup> It made the IAF recognize that it needed better electronic countermeasures as well as dedicated aircraft to take out such targets in a future conflict.

In 2001, following a terrorist attack on the Indian parliament, the government mobilized its troops on the India-Pakistan border in an attempt at coercive diplomacy.<sup>14</sup> Both sides eventually backed down, and there were claims that the Pakistani government had threatened the first use of nuclear weapons. In Pakistan's subsequent public declaration about its nuclear weapons doctrine, it has been argued that the Pakistan army would use nuclear weapons if there were a fear of being overrun by Indian troops.<sup>15</sup> This led to discussion in India of how to use airpower in the future without crossing the red lines that would trigger a Pakistani nuclear response.<sup>16</sup> The preferred course of action, it would seem, would be to develop airpower so that strikes could be carried out with pinpoint accuracy to fulfill limited objectives rather than precipitating a full-scale conflict. Along with the need to find new approaches to regional conflict situations has been the call for an air force that can play an extra-regional role.

With the growth of India's role and stature in international affairs, there has been the call to make the Indian military more capable of extra-regional power projection. The current chief of the Indian air force, Air Chief Marshal Fali Major, described the changed strategic parameters of the IAF as follows:

The redrawn strategic boundaries of a resurgent India, therefore, extend from the Persian Gulf to the Straits of Malacca and from the Central Asian Republics to the Indian Ocean. The enlarged strategic dimensions necessitate not only a radical change in our strategic thinking but also accentuate the role of aerospace power in the new security arena.<sup>17</sup>

The future threat environment has, therefore, been described as one that encompasses a range of scenarios that includes:

To summarise, in the geopolitical, geostrategic and security environment that is likely to prevail in the 2020s, the dictates of national security would place the following demands on armed forces of the nation:

- To be prepared for a prolonged and widespread multi-front border war with China with only a remote possibility of employment of nuclear weapons.
- To be prepared for a short and intense conflict with Pakistan with the real possibility of the first use of nuclear weapons by the adversary.
- To be prepared for simultaneous conflict with both the potential adversaries acting in collusion.
- To sustain the capability to fight a prolonged low intensity conflict in Kashmir and other sensitive regions of the country in the pursuit of internal security.
- To develop and maintain the capability for rapid strategic intervention and power projection in the region extending from the Straits of Malacca to Central Asia and the Gulf to safeguard and promote national interests.
- To play a dominant role in the management of disasters and natural calamity in the region of interest.<sup>18</sup>

The IAF has responded to this expanded mission by acquiring a fleet of aerial refueling tankers and getting a long-range combat aircraft in the Su-30. It has also purchased the Phalcon airborne early warning system from Israel and put it on Russian Il-78s. Additionally, the indigenous AEW system designed by the Defense Research and Development Organization is to be integrated with Embraer jets.<sup>19</sup>

The Indian navy, similarly, has been enhancing its maritime air capability. The 1990s saw the acquisition of the Bear reconnaissance aircraft, and more recently, the government has acquired the Russian aircraft carrier *Gorshkov* with a component of MiG-29K fighters.

Both the navy and the air force see themselves as projecting Indian power, given the challenges posed by maintaining the free flow of energy supplies, helping in humanitarian missions, and the need to tackle regional threats in the Indian Ocean. Additionally, the IAF sees itself taking on a two-front threat from China and Pakistan. In terms of conventional airpower, Pakistan is viewed as less of a problem, since India should be able to maintain air superiority in a future conflict.

Given the changing requirements of the Indian armed forces, there is a recognition that they require more versatile and better-quality weaponry to fulfill the changing missions that they will be tackling. What may facilitate the acquisition of such weaponry is India's changed political worldview—particularly its opening to the United States.

## The Changed Environment

For two reasons, the Indian arms market has changed to provide more favorable conditions for the United States: an improved relationship with the United States and the “normalization” of the relationship with Russia. Since 2005 India has reshaped its relationship with the United States, with Washington very clearly making the decision to help India become a major power. The centerpiece of this proposal has become the India-US nuclear deal.

The other reason for a changed environment is the problems in the relationship with Russia. The collapse of the USSR first saw Moscow lose interest in the relationship with India and, at a practical level, there was a contraction in the spare parts available to sustain India’s largely Soviet military arsenal.<sup>20</sup> The relationship was revived in the late 1990s (with Vladimir Putin’s 2000 visit to India leading to about \$3 billion in Russian arms sales) but it became a purely commercial one.<sup>21</sup> The Russians wanted payment in dollars and were unwilling to sell weapons at the friendship rates that were given in the Soviet era. Since then, India has purchased Su-30MKI fighters, Il-78 AWACS platforms, Mi-17 helicopters, Kilo-class submarines, T-90 tanks, and various types of missiles from Russia. India has also agreed to jointly develop a “fifth-generation fighter aircraft,” the Sukhoi T-50 PAK-FA, with Russia although the degree to which India will actually participate in the development of the plane has been questioned.<sup>22</sup>

More recently, the relationship has run into some turbulence because of the delays in providing new weaponry to India, the fact that Russian weapons are not matching their stated standards, and hefty cost overruns, with the Russians playing hardball with their Indian counterparts. Thus, India recently refused to accept updated Kilo submarines because the Klub missile system that was added to it did not work properly.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, the Russians have told the Indian navy that they require an additional \$1.2 billion to complete the refurbishment of the carrier *Gorshkov* (now renamed *Vikramaditya*).<sup>24</sup> This puts India over a barrel since it has bought the supporting air wing based on the configuration of the carrier. India’s naval chief publicly complained that the Russians had used Indian money to modernize their shipyard facilities and, in doing so, were now able to attract new business and push the Indian carrier project onto the back burner.<sup>25</sup> Also, the India-Russia medium-range transport aircraft project has run into funding problems.

What the Russians have also been doing is essentially tying the availability of certain weapons systems to the purchase of others. Thus, one of the reasons for buying the *Gorshkov* was that the Russians would subsequently sweeten the pot by offering India strategic systems like the Akula-class submarines (reports now indicate that India will be leasing two Akula-class boats) and Tu-22 Backfire bombers (a deal subsequently scrapped).<sup>26</sup> Further, when deals fall through in one area, there have been repercussions in the purchase of other weapons. When India declined to purchase Russian nuclear reactors after coming close to inking the deal, Moscow retaliated by asking for price increases on a series of weapons programs that included the *Gorshkov* and the Su-30MKI fighters.<sup>27</sup>

One should stress, however, that this is not the end of the India-Russia military relationship in the way that the Egypt-Soviet Union relationship ended in the early 1970s. The Indian defense minister was quick to distance his government from the remarks of the Indian navy chief about the delays and price increase with the *Gorshkov* project. Further, the Indian government continues to be interested in oil exploration in Sakhalin, has entered into an agreement with Russia to develop a fifth-generation fighter aircraft, and retains plans for the possible joint development of a transport aircraft. What we are likely to see, therefore, is a continued link with Russia, but at the same time, India will move towards other suppliers to reduce the critical dependence on Moscow in some fields.<sup>28</sup> It is due to this factor that a market opportunity has arisen for the United States.

The United States possesses one other advantage, and that lies in the changing geostrategic calculations of India vis-à-vis the Asian security environment—specifically, the rise of China. Indian policy makers and military strategists face the same dilemma that most Asian countries now face: on the one hand they all reap huge economic benefits from the rise of China; alternatively, they are concerned about China's military and political forays.<sup>29</sup> India now has a nearly \$40-billion bilateral trade relationship with China, and the goal is to expand it to \$60 billion by 2010 (although one estimate puts it at about \$75 billion by 2010).<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, several contentious issues remain between India and China. Beijing has not settled the border dispute with India, and more recently, the Indians have complained of increased border incursions by Chinese forces into Indian territory. Moreover, China has moved away from its previous position of not claiming areas with settled populations and has



laid claims to the Indian province of Tawang. Politically, as the Indian commentator M. D. Nalapat argues,

While Beijing tries to woo New Delhi away from an embrace with Washington, the Chinese leadership has tried to ensure that India does not gain significantly from any China concession. The reality is that the relationship between India and China is more competitive than complementary. While China needs to overcome India's current advantage in computer software and in other fields of the knowledge economy, India will have to become a manufacturing platform that can rival China if the country is to ensure a high level of blue-collar employment.

In short, both will ultimately poach on the other's turf as they are competing for the same markets and sources of technology. Thus, there is a limit to the distance China will go in seeking to convince New Delhi that it has morphed into a close friend. There will need to be much more atmospherics than substance [during a recent visit by India's prime minister to China], and the CCP leadership will be hoping that India takes such intangible "gains" or, as some Chinese experts call it, "sweet water."<sup>31</sup>

China remains opposed to India becoming a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, and it continues to have a military relationship with Pakistan that in the past has led to the transfer of both nuclear and missile technology. India also remains concerned about the fact that China is "locking down" energy supplies around the world and that this will shut out New Delhi and adversely affect India's future economic development.<sup>32</sup> Given this future challenge, Indian analysts see a friendlier relationship with the United States and the prospects of a true strategic partnership as the way to balance the rise of China in Asia. Part of this growing strategic partnership lies in the procurement of weapons systems to have interoperability for possible joint missions in the future.

## **Requirements in the Indian Aviation Market**

As India modernizes its airpower, it requires combat, transport, reconnaissance, and AEW aircraft. Additionally, it has a need for light- as well as heavy-lift helicopters that can reach high altitudes to service Indian troops in the Himalayas. Along with manned aircraft, India has a growing need for unmanned aerial vehicles to patrol its borders, carry out surveillance missions, and be used in counterinsurgency operations.

Much of the buzz around aviation sales in India centers on the proposed medium multirole combat aircraft (MMRCA) competition. The IAF initially planned to purchase 126 Mirage 2000 aircraft to phase out

its fleet of aging MiG-21s. Dassault subsequently cancelled production of the aircraft and upped the ante by suggesting that India buy the more expensive Rafale. Instead of single-sourcing the order, the Indian government decided to hold a competition for the procurement, and this led to bids by the manufacturers of the Swedish Gripen, the Typhoon Eurofighter, the MiG-35, the F-16, and the F-18.

This is a \$9- to 10-billion deal, so it has assumed a high level of visibility in the Indian and international press; both Boeing and Lockheed are pressing hard to win the bid. As is the case with most Indian arms deals, and despite the proclamation of new procurement guidelines, the acquisition process has been marked by lengthy delays. Coupled with these delays have been the unique dynamics of Indian coalition politics.

Nominally speaking, India has had a national consensus on its foreign and national security policies. This consensus dictated that India pursue a policy of nonalignment, retain a nuclear weapons program, and seek autonomy in international affairs. In real terms the consensus has been broken by the narrow political interests and ambitions of the various political parties both within and outside the ruling coalition. The Indo-US nuclear deal was delayed because the different political parties in the ruling coalition could not agree as to whether the deal was in India's long-term interest. The various communist parties, who account for over 60 of the 545 seats in parliament and have supported the ruling Congress Party coalition from the outside, have ostensibly argued that the deal would not allow India to conduct further nuclear tests and this would impinge on its sovereignty. The communist parties' resistance has been attributed to a degree of anti-Americanism, the belief that the deal would not best serve India's energy interests, and to questions of sovereignty, although cynics observe that the communist parties have traditionally been opposed to the pursuit of an Indian nuclear weapons program.

In the opposition, the right-wing nationalist party—the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)—has also been opposed to the deal, even though the party has been traditionally viewed as pro-American. Again it seems narrow political calculations rather than a broader national interest may be prevailing in the decision-making process in this case. Coalitional politics, therefore, makes progress even slower than it normally would be in the Indian system.

India's checkered history of weapons procurement, with repeated charges of bribery and corruption, has also led governments to be cautious about

how to carry out the acquisition process.<sup>33</sup> The present government has sought to create a transparent acquisition process, but it seems to have shelved the acquisition of the MMRCA for the time being, since elections are due in early 2009. Thus the entire process will be carried over for about a year. The next government will then have to short-list three airplanes for flight tests—which could take another couple of years—and only then would a choice be made and negotiations begun. We may well see negotiations that stretch into a five-year process.

From the perspective of Lockheed, which is trying to sell the F-16, this could be problematic, since it would mean keeping a production line open for another 5–6 years in the hope that the Indians agree to the deal. It is also likely that by the time the Indian government reaches a decision, the F-35 production line will be opening up, in which case the argument may be made, why not offer the F-35 to the Indians? This may serve to be the win-win situation that both countries want to help further their broader relationship. It would cement the relationship with the Indians by offering a fifth-generation aircraft instead of the F-16, which the Indians see as dated and flown by Pakistan—which is viewed unfavorably in Indian circles. The F-35, on the other hand, would be viewed not only as a state-of-the-art fighter but would also suggest to New Delhi that India is valued as a serious friend and ally by Washington. It could also help New Delhi distance itself from Moscow, since it would lessen the dependence on Russia for advanced weapons systems. From an American perspective, the sale of what may eventually be between 100 and 200 F-35s would help cement the future of that program by reducing costs significantly. Additionally, the plane would be a better fit for the Indian navy—rather than the F-18 Super Hornet, the naval version of the Rafale, or the MiG-29K—which has already expressed an interest in the jump-jet version of the aircraft. The configuration of the new Indian aircraft carrier, the *Vikramaditya*, requires an aircraft that can take off vertically or using a ski jump and land using arrestor wires. This effectively rules out both the Rafale and F-18, which require a catapult launch. That leaves the MiG-29, which can be launched using the carrier's ski jump but is technologically a generation behind the Rafale and the Super Hornet and would not significantly add to the Indian navy's airpower capabilities.

## **UAVs**

The Indian armed forces have learned from the use of UAVs and UCAVs in the war on terror as well as in counterinsurgency operations in Iraq. UAVs are an ideal tool for India, which faces several insurgencies, has a rugged border terrain, and covers large maritime areas of responsibility. Infiltration by jihadi elements continues from Pakistan across the LOC in Kashmir, and India requires the capability to monitor such intrusions. The growing Maoist insurgency within the country also requires security personnel to have better surveillance and monitoring capabilities. And there is the problem posed by the insurgencies in several of the northeastern states of India, where difficult terrain and soft borders with Bangladesh and Myanmar make reconnaissance and surveillance a problem. The cost of poor aerial surveillance became apparent following the Mumbai terror attacks of November 2008, as the terrorists were able to come in undetected by sea.

To date the Indian government has refused to use airpower internally, making the argument that insurgents are citizens of India, and therefore, aerial bombardment cannot be used against them. The fear of collateral damage has also made the government reluctant to carry out air strikes.<sup>34</sup> Indian analysts argue that the use of airpower would up the ante and lead insurgent groups to get more advanced weaponry, like antiair munitions. There is a belief, however, that airpower can be used in an unobtrusive manner to ensure security and that is by using UAVs to carry out surveillance and monitoring—UAVs have, in fact, been used for such purposes in India.<sup>35</sup>

India has its own UAV program, but it has had to import unmanned aircraft from Israel. In the future, it will require more-advanced UAVs to carry out missions both within the country and along the border. There have been several incidents along the border with Pakistan of both countries' aircraft straying across and violating the other's airspace. The political ramifications of shooting down a manned aircraft are serious, as in the case of the Pakistani Atlantique reconnaissance plane that was downed by India when it strayed over Indian airspace (Pakistan claimed the plane was shot over its own airspace). In such circumstances a UAV reduces some of the political tension that would result if a similar manned flight were brought down. Further, given that the Indian government needs 24/7 coverage of the LOC to prevent jihadi infiltration, an unmanned vehicle becomes the most effective and cost-saving way to conduct such a monitoring effort.

Further, the Indian army and the Indian navy are both calling for the development of their own air arms so that they can more effectively pursue their operations. The Indian army, in what looks like a turf battle with the IAF, is seeking to have an integral “tactical” air arm that includes UAVs, helicopters—both for transport and assault—and tactical fixed-wing transport aircraft. The army is arguing that it would have control over tactical systems and leave the strategic part of the war effort to the IAF. It is too early to say how this battle will be settled, but there is likely to be an Indian market for small UAVs the size of the Raven.

## **Helicopters**

India has a requirement for light- and medium-lift helicopters, and in both areas, American firms are competitive. The Indian government overturned an IAF decision to acquire AS 550 Eurocopters and instead—following protests by Bell, which was trying to sell its own 407—asked that the competition be reopened. The IAF also would like to acquire 80 medium-lift helicopters as well as heavy-lift helicopters; the Boeing Chinook has been mentioned as a possible purchase. The army has stated as part of its attempts to acquire an organic air capability and the Indian government has issued a request for proposals to buy 22 combat helicopters—Boeing was asked to submit a proposal for the sale of the Apache AH-64 attack helicopter.<sup>36</sup>

India, therefore, is seeking to develop airpower to meet the challenges of a twenty-first-century battle environment as well as to project power extra-regionally. The Bush administration recognized India’s aspirations and since 2005 has taken steps to help it develop into a world-class power. However, translating this commitment into a working relationship marked by large-scale arms sales is going to require a lot more time. Residual suspicions about American intentions are only one part of the problem. The lengthy nature of the Indian arms-procurement process, along with the problems created by coalitional politics in that country, make major arms sales a long and difficult process.

There is also the fact that competing nations can offer better terms of trade or inducements. Russia’s ability to not only provide conventional weaponry but also extra-regional systems like the Akula subs—a comparable transfer of nuclear submarines would not be possible under US laws—places the United States at a disadvantage in the Indian market. On the other hand, both of India’s major political parties—the Congress

and the BJP—are pro-American in their orientation; this is evident in the encouragement given to US firms to compete in the defense sector. Rival firms even complain that the United States is able to successfully pressure the Indian government to cancel competitions to afford US firms a better chance (this has been one of the allegations about the cancellation of the award of a helicopter deal to Eurocopter).<sup>37</sup>

The opportunity, therefore, exists to succeed in the Indian aerospace market and to work towards building a long-term strategic relationship with New Delhi. Arms sales will, however, be only a small part of this process, and failure to get lucrative projects like the MMRCA should not be viewed as setbacks to arms sales or to the long-term relationship. Instead, it should be understood that the Indian government will continue to push contracts in the direction of the United States while not shutting off traditional suppliers like Russia and the EU. One should most likely expect “Solomonesque” decisions, where the Indian government splits contracts and procures weapons systems from multiple suppliers. The other possibility is that the United States gets a series of smaller contracts to allow it to be a player in the Indian market and slowly increase Indian confidence in Washington as a reliable arms supplier. We may already be witnessing this trend, as India has agreed to purchase eight Boeing P-8I maritime reconnaissance aircraft.<sup>38</sup> If this is viewed as a long-term process, then there is a lucrative aerospace market for the United States to develop. ■■■

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# Saving Darfur

## Seductive Analogies and the Limits of Airpower Coercion in Sudan

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BY ANY measure, the humanitarian crisis in Darfur is a tragedy. In 2003 an unexpected rebellion in the remote states of Darfur drove the Sudanese government in Khartoum to initiate a brutal counterinsurgency campaign destroying thousands of villages and killing hundreds of thousands of Darfuris, many of them women and children.<sup>1</sup> In a region of over 6 million people, nearly 2.7 million Darfuris remain “internally displaced persons” with an additional quarter of a million eking out their existence in refugee camps across the border in Chad.<sup>2</sup> Thousands of humanitarian workers risk hijacking, abduction, and attack from armed assailants to care for and feed those affected by the conflict.<sup>3</sup>

Although the level of violence has declined drastically since 2004, attacks on villages in Darfur by *janjaweed* militia and government forces continue. Campaigns in the region have been especially brutal, with the government using helicopter gunships and Antonov cargo aircraft to terrorize civilians with bullets and “barrel bombs” filled with explosives and metal shards.<sup>4</sup> The atrocities and tactics of the government of Sudan have received significant attention from the media, humanitarian organizations, and a plethora of Hollywood celebrities, yet the international community remains focused on diplomacy rather than decisive actions.<sup>5</sup> Many of the community leaders in al-Fashir, the capital of Northern Darfur, have shaken the hands of more than a dozen heads of state, yet the United Nations (UN) struggles to provide half of the 26,000 authorized peacekeepers for the embattled region.<sup>6</sup>

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**Figure 1. Sudan.** (Reprinted from <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/sudan.pdf>.)

Unilateral sanctions and engaged diplomacy were the primary methods used by the Bush administration to confront Sudan's president Omar Hassan al-Bashir, but America's involvement may escalate due to the election of Pres. Barack Obama. Like Pres. George W. Bush before him, President Obama has called the actions of the Sudanese government in Darfur "genocide" but added that the United States should set up a "no-fly zone" over the area.<sup>7</sup> Members of the former Clinton administration and foreign policy advisors for the Obama campaign have also compared the intransigence of al-Bashir to the actions of former Yugoslavian president Slobodan Milosevic. In 2006 Susan Rice (the current US ambassador to the UN) argued that al-Bashir's refusal to accept UN peacekeepers called for the destruction of the Sudanese air force and likened the proposed air campaign to the 1999 victory in Kosovo.<sup>8</sup> A coalition of NATO countries did establish no-fly zones and conduct air strikes for humanitarian operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, but are those conflicts helpful analogies for the current situation in Darfur? How should the air campaigns in the former Yugoslav republics guide the new administration's strategy in Darfur? Wars, specifically the most recent wars, have traditionally dominated the minds of political leaders.<sup>9</sup> The purpose of this analysis is to examine America's most recent humanitarian interventions where no-fly zones facilitated peacekeeping operations and to explore how they could shape courses of action, theories of success, and potential policy options for Darfur.

After a brief introduction to the history of the Darfur crisis and the role of analogies, airpower, and coercion in humanitarian interventions, this article compares the presumptions, likenesses, and differences of the current conflict to three seductively similar humanitarian operations in the 1990s: Operation Provide Comfort in northern Iraq, Operation Deny Flight in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Operation Allied Force in Kosovo. Not unlike the atrocities initiated by Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic, the actions of al-Bashir from 2003 to 2004 are truly horrific. Unless there is an immense shift, however, in the nature of the Sudanese conflict and the overarching geopolitical landscape, a no-fly zone and air strikes are unlikely to provide the justice or response desired by the Obama administration. On the contrary, military actions under current conditions have the potential to drastically increase the level of human catastrophe in the region and implicate the United States in a conflict it will find difficult to escape.

## **The Darfur Crisis**

Darfur's massive political, security, and humanitarian crisis is the complex product of armed factions from Chadian civil wars, the civil war between Arab Muslims in North Sudan and African Christians in South Sudan, and local conflicts over dwindling resources due to overpopulation and desertification. The flashpoint for the conflict occurred in April 2003 when an alliance of Islamic rebel movements and African tribes led coordinated attacks on an air base and other military outposts in Darfur. The rebels blew up government transport aircraft and helicopters, captured the base commander, and executed 200 Sudanese army prisoners despite their surrender.<sup>10</sup> The timing of the attacks was deliberate and costly for the predominantly Arab Sudanese government, which was negotiating a power-sharing agreement with the liberation movement in South Sudan after two decades of civil war. The African movement in Darfur hoped to gain its fair share of national wealth and security after decades of cyclical drought, years of neglect from the central government, and violent encroachment of farmland by former Chadian rebels and Arab herders.<sup>11</sup> The government did not anticipate the threat from its poor Western relatives, and the repression of the uprising was brutal and swift. Al-Bashir's regime could not rely on the Sudanese army to crush the insurrection because most of the recruits and noncommissioned officers were from Darfur.<sup>12</sup> Instead, the government made a deal with armed bands and Arab tribes in the region. The camel-herding tribes could pursue their territorial ambitions in Darfur in return for suppressing the rebellion.<sup>13</sup> What followed was an ethnic-cleansing campaign or "counterinsurgency on the cheap."<sup>14</sup> From 2003 to 2004, *janjaweed* militia routinely surrounded and burned rebel villages after Sudanese aircraft had bombed and strafed the inhabitants. In the process of clearing villages, militiamen often raped girls and women, killed livestock, and tossed small children back into burning houses.<sup>15</sup>

Nongovernmental organizations (NGO) and the international community reacted with horror to the atrocities, but a response to the outbreak in violence was difficult to coordinate. Many feared the conflict could derail peace negotiations for the civil war in the South, which had killed over two million people over the previous two decades.<sup>16</sup> The United States and NATO countries could not commit the large number of troops or accept the casualties and commitment necessary for a ground operation in Darfur because of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, so the international community pursued a wide range of diplomatic initiatives targeting al-Bashir's regime

from 2004 to 2007.<sup>17</sup> Major efforts included improving the access of humanitarian organizations, orchestrating the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between North and South Sudan, negotiating the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement between the government and rebel factions, seeking the prosecution of leaders for war crimes in the International Criminal Court (ICC), and deploying underequipped, outnumbered African Union (AU) and United Nations peacekeeping forces.<sup>18</sup> Executing a clear and coherent strategy in Darfur was difficult given the sheer size of the region, scope of the conflict, and the multiplicity of actors and objectives.

### **Similarities of the Darfur Crisis with Dominant Analogies**

The conflict in Darfur is a problem that regional experts, policy makers, and humanitarian organizations have struggled with for years. Understanding and describing the underlying context of the crisis is difficult. Gérard Prunier, a prolific author, historian, and expert on East Africa, warns readers in his book on Darfur that “*everything* does not *make sense*.”<sup>19</sup> As President Obama begins to shift his focus from domestic to international issues, his administration will attempt to make sense of the situation in Darfur. Public comments from his foreign-policy advisors suggest that his administration will use historical analogies to facilitate analysis of the conflict and to advocate forceful action.<sup>20</sup>

Unfortunately, there are identifiable and systematic biases in the use of historical analogies.<sup>21</sup> In many cases, decision makers fail to analyze key presumptions behind historical analogies and are predisposed to “plunge toward action” and advocate misguided policies that administrations could have avoided with closer inspection.<sup>22</sup> Operations Provide Comfort, Deny Flight, and Allied Force are irresistible and dangerous analogies for the Darfur crisis because the conflicts have many similarities, some of which are inherent to humanitarian interventions. The campaigns in northern Iraq, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo addressed grievances common to many intrastate conflicts in the 1990s: the rebellion of marginalized peoples denied their share of political power and wealth of the state. They also featured incompetent governments that used racial or ethnic divisions to divide and suppress the rebellion, with the United States and its allies using airpower and military force to confront the suppressors.<sup>23</sup> In 1997 the Clinton administration called this type of humanitarian intervention

“complex contingency operations” and specifically distinguished the campaigns in Bosnia and northern Iraq from other low-level military actions like hostage rescues, counterterrorism missions, or interventions due to natural disasters.<sup>24</sup>

### **Common Coercive Challenges**

Coercion was a major component of these “complex contingency operations,” yet the characteristics of humanitarian interventions made coercion difficult.<sup>25</sup> Coercion is the use of force, either threatened or actual, “to induce an adversary to change its behavior.”<sup>26</sup> Coercion was necessary in northern Iraq and the Balkans to deter belligerents from disrupting aid organizations and to compel the oppressive governments to remove underlying causes of the conflict. To be successful, the enforcement of a no-fly zone in Darfur would have to overcome three common challenges of executing a coercion strategy during humanitarian operations: low strategic interest, competing coalition objectives, and nonstate actors.

**Low Strategic Interest.** One of the major challenges for a military intervention in Darfur is that the United States has little or no strategic interest in the region, which could result in tentative domestic support for a prospective military campaign. Sudan is no longer a terrorist threat. The government of Sudan once welcomed Osama bin Laden to its country, but since the 9/11 attacks, the regime has cooperated with intelligence agencies and supported US counterterrorism efforts.<sup>27</sup> US interests in Darfur are predominantly humanitarian, and an intervention in Sudan must overcome the stigma of America’s experience of another humanitarian operation in Somalia. That intervention killed 18 service members, compelled the administration to remove US forces from the country in six months, and affected the administration’s calculus of subsequent interventions in the Balkans.<sup>28</sup> Obtaining broad public support for an intervention in Darfur will be difficult because of the lack of strategic interests in the region and the potentially high political cost of military operations in Africa.

**Competing Coalition Objectives.** If the United States is to intervene militarily in Darfur, it will most likely participate as a member of a coalition to provide the legitimacy, ground troops, and donors necessary for military action and humanitarian support. While the participants in the operations in northern Iraq and the Balkans were primarily from NATO countries, the UN peacekeeping forces in Darfur consist of soldiers provided by member states of the African Union and combat engineers from

China.<sup>29</sup> The overextension of the US military in Iraq and Afghanistan increases the imperative to obtain broad international support for additional operations in Darfur. The United States will have to manage the competing interests and objectives of potential donor countries if the campaign is to be as effective as Operation Provide Comfort and the NATO campaigns in the Balkans.

**Nonstate Actors.** The nature of the belligerents was also a major factor in the Balkan conflicts and is especially important in Darfur. Many of the perpetrators in intrastate conflicts are nonstate actors and have loose connections with governments that may or may not sanction their tactics. Due to the disintegration of the Yugoslav army, Milosevic's regime and political leaders recruited gang members, soccer hooligans, and criminals to help government forces ethnically cleanse Balkan communities.<sup>30</sup> In Darfur, *janjaweed* militias provide a similar service. The word *janjaweed* originated in the 1960s as a pejorative term used to describe poor vagrants from Arab tribes.<sup>31</sup> Now it describes a makeshift organization of more than six different armed groups that receive support from Sudan's military intelligence agency. Few agree on the precise makeup of the *janjaweed*, and the organization is difficult to locate and identify, especially from the air in an area the size of France. Limits on the use of force during humanitarian operations combined with lax ties between the central government and perpetrators make coercion difficult, even when the culprits are easy to find.

### Common Coercive Mechanisms

An effective strategy in humanitarian operations requires coercive mechanisms or processes by which threats generate concessions from the adversary.<sup>32</sup> Common mechanisms include eroding the powerbase of the targeted government, creating unrest within the population, decapitating leaders of the regime, weakening the strength of the country as a whole, and denying adversaries the ability to accomplish their objectives. The challenges of humanitarian operations invalidate many of these options, however. The campaigns in the Balkans and northern Iraq successfully used two: denial and powerbase erosion. Both mechanisms could play a large role in the enforcement of a no-fly zone in Sudan.

**Denial.** Nullifying an opponent's strategy by reducing its ability to accomplish its objectives is denial. Some denial strategies "thwart the enemy's military strategy for taking and holding its territorial objectives, compelling

concessions to avoid futile expenditure of further resources.”<sup>33</sup> This was the case for Operation Deny Flight, which tried to deny Bosnian Serbs the ability to terrorize and conquer Bosnian Muslim and Croatian villages during the Bosnian war. After Bosnian Muslims and Croats voted to secede from the Yugoslavian Federation in 1992, Bosnian Serb irregulars attacked Bosnian Muslim and Croat villages with air support from the Yugoslavian air force.<sup>34</sup> The Bosnian Serbs hoped to force Muslim and Croat civilians out of Serb-controlled territory and establish a Serbian Republic of Bosnia. Operation Deny Flight established a no-fly zone over the battlefield to prevent the Bosnian Serbs from using their ground-attack fighters and helicopter gunships to support their ethnic cleansing campaign. Sudan also has fighters, bombers, and helicopter gunships, and as late as May 2008, the Sudanese government used an Antonov medium bomber to strike a village in North Darfur.<sup>35</sup> A robust no-fly zone over Darfur could prevent such attacks and enforce a 2005 UN Security Council resolution forbidding “offensive military flights in and over the Darfur region.”<sup>36</sup>

**Powerbase Erosion.** The other common mechanism used by the United States and its allies in northern Iraq and the Balkans is powerbase erosion. This mechanism attempts to undercut the control and leadership of a regime by attacking the political elites and cliques that support it.<sup>37</sup> During Operation Provide Comfort, Saddam Hussein was extremely sensitive to air strikes against high-value targets in Baghdad, and the coalition maintained a squadron of long-range attack aircraft in Turkey to act as a credible threat to his regime.<sup>38</sup> In Operation Allied Force, NATO attacked military-related industries, utilities, and other targets in Belgrade to foster elite discontent and erode popular support of Milosevic. Some argue that mounting pressure from political elites, civilian oligarchy, and army leadership contributed to Milosevic’s yielding to NATO demands.<sup>39</sup> Obama’s advisors suggest similar threats could coerce Sudan’s leadership and that the “credible threat or use of force” is the “one language Khartoum understands.”<sup>40</sup>

### **Common Coercive Instruments**

The United States has numerous tools at its disposal to trigger coercive mechanisms and to begin the process by which threats generate adversary concessions. Examples include air strikes, invasion, nuclear retaliation, economic sanctions, political isolation, and insurgency support.<sup>41</sup> The high cost of many of these instruments makes them unsuitable for



humanitarian operations, however. The strategies for Operations Provide Comfort, Deny Flight, and Allied Force relied primarily on three: airpower, economic sanctions, and political isolation.

**Airpower.** No-fly zones and air strikes are common military instruments for US humanitarian operations because of their flexibility and relatively low cost. As Eliot Cohen remarked, "Air power is an unusually seductive form of military strength, in part because, like modern courtship, it appears to offer gratification without commitment."<sup>42</sup> US air strikes, including the northern Iraq and Balkans conflicts, rarely result in friendly casualties. The air campaign for Operation Allied Force lasted 78 days with zero battlefield casualties. Airpower can also contribute to denial and powerbase-reduction strategies and has the ability to expand or contract the level of destruction to suit the needs of the coercer. Because airpower is cheap, flexible, and seemingly successful, air strikes have become a standard form of intimidation for the United States. Former Clinton advisors Susan Rice and Anthony Lake cite the administration's 1998 cruise missile strike in Khartoum as a primary reason why al-Bashir's regime cooperates with the United States on counterterrorism.<sup>43</sup> Airpower is a seductive component of many analogies for the Darfur crisis because of perceptions that it is effective and easy to use.

**Economic Sanctions and Political Isolation.** Coalition air forces in northern Iraq and the Balkans did not operate in isolation from other coercive instruments. Sanctions and diplomatic measures reinforced air threats by imposing costs and denying benefits for the regimes of Saddam and Milosevic. A comprehensive economic embargo of Iraq and an international coalition of countries that included Arab nations completely isolated Saddam during Operation Provide Comfort.<sup>44</sup> The UN passed a series of economic sanctions against Bosnia and Serbia during the Balkan conflicts, and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia indicted high-level Bosnian Serbs and Milosevic during the respective air campaigns in Bosnia and Kosovo.<sup>45</sup>

If applied for Darfur, airpower in Sudan will also operate within the context of economic sanctions and indictments by the International Criminal Court. In 1993, the United States designated Sudan as a state sponsor of terrorism, which subjects the country to restrictions on foreign assistance. UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1556 and 1591 prohibit the transfer of arms to the government of Sudan in Darfur as well as to rebels in the area.<sup>46</sup> UNSCR 1672 targets sanctions against four individuals:

two rebel leaders and two representatives of the Sudanese government.<sup>47</sup> In 2007, President Bush expanded the 1997 sanctions imposed by the Clinton administration. Both regimes applied unilateral restrictions on imports and exports, restricted financial transactions to and from Sudan, and froze assets of the Sudanese government. The ICC also indicted several mid-level antagonists in the conflict for genocide and recently issued a warrant for al-Bashir's arrest for war crimes and crimes against humanity.<sup>48</sup> Any military action in the Darfur crisis will have to operate in conjunction with a myriad of economic and diplomatic measures attempting to coerce the government of Sudan.

### **Differences of the Darfur Crisis from Dominant Analogies**

The surface similarities between Operation Provide Comfort, the Balkan conflicts, and Darfur suggest possible airpower solutions to the crisis, prospects for success, and anticipated challenges. However, "more often than not, decision-makers invoke inappropriate analogues that not only fail to illuminate the new situation but also mislead by emphasizing superficial and irrelevant parallels."<sup>49</sup> The remainder of this article anticipates irrelevant parallels between the analogous conflicts and the Darfur crisis and examines key presumptions that sustain them. Figure 2 (p. 91) summarizes the findings.

#### **Operation Provide Comfort**

Operation Provide Comfort was one of the most successful humanitarian operations in history. After the Iraq War, a Kurdish uprising and subsequent government repression drove over 400,000 refugees into the mountains along the Turkish-Iraqi border.<sup>50</sup> In response, coalition forces successfully defended the Kurdish refugees from Iraqi forces, aided their return to a safe zone in northern Iraq, and airlifted massive amounts of humanitarian supplies to the region. A key presumption emerges from the campaign: a similar operation could aid Darfuri refugees in Chad and "save Africans." The circumstances surrounding Operation Provide Comfort were exceptional, however, and the United States will find it difficult to recreate two conditions that made the return of Kurdish refugees in Iraq a success: a strong strategic interest to solve the refugee crisis and a demonstrated ability to apply force in the region.

**Differences in International Interests.** Unlike Darfur, the return of refugees to their homeland in Iraq was of vital interest to the United States and key allies. The Kurds are a large, disgruntled minority in Turkey, and an influx of hundreds of thousands of Kurdish refugees was a significant security threat. Turkey publicly invited the allies to intervene in the crisis and closed its borders, trapping the refugees in the mountains in the middle of winter.<sup>51</sup> A month earlier, Pres. George H. W. Bush had urged the Iraqi people to “take matters in their own hands” and “force Saddam Hussein, the dictator, to step aside.”<sup>52</sup> Material support of the subsequent rebellion by the United States was nonexistent, however, and the Iraqi military crushed Kurdish guerrillas with the help of helicopter gunships and fixed-wing fighter bombers flying in defiance of UNSCR 686.<sup>53</sup> The security needs of an important ally and media images of Kurdish suffering compelled the administration to respond with air-dropped supplies only seven days after the crisis began. Within weeks, coalition forces established a security zone in northern Iraq. Within seven weeks, the humanitarian operation completely repatriated the Kurds from the Turkish border region.<sup>54</sup>

In contrast, the motivations for intervention in Darfur are almost completely humanitarian. The 250,000 refugees on the border with Chad are only a security threat for the region itself, and media coverage of the human suffering is light. Ninety-six percent of the deaths in the Darfur crisis occurred between 2003 and 2004, and news of the genocide almost disappeared after North and South Sudan signed the CPA in January 2005, ending 21 years of civil war.<sup>55</sup> There was an uptick in coverage prior to the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing and the 2008 presidential elections, but the most recent coverage focused on the impending indictment of al-Bashir by the ICC.<sup>56</sup> The population of refugee camps has stabilized, but the security associated with them remains an issue. Since January 2008, bandits and assailants have killed 11 humanitarian workers, abducted 170 staff members, and hijacked 225 vehicles in Darfur.<sup>57</sup> Despite the violence, major powers have not committed military resources to secure refugees and humanitarian personnel in the region. Perhaps the lackluster support of the one million Kurdish refugees who fled to Iran instead of Turkey is more revealing. Iran received just over half the total international assistance for Kurdish refugees despite its protection of a refugee population almost triple that of Turkey.<sup>58</sup>

**Differences in Credibility.** One primary reason why Operation Provide Comfort was able to deter Saddam’s regime from disturbing the return of Kurdish refugees was because the United States and its allies credibly

demonstrated the “skill and will” to apply force.<sup>59</sup> The operation began only two months after Operation Desert Storm, which included a devastating air campaign that crippled Saddam’s forces. Many of the weapons, soldiers, and procedures were still in place to threaten the regime. Ground forces were also available to distribute supplies, provide security, and expand the safe zone for the eventual return of Kurdish refugees. The United States inserted 5,000 troops into the region, and the commander of the combined task force, LTG John Shalikashvili, met personally with Iraqi military representatives positioned along the border of northern Iraq to dictate the terms of the intervention and the scope of the safe zone.<sup>60</sup> A day after the meeting, Marines on the ground directed mock air strikes on Iraqi positions and compelled Iraqi forces to leave the area.<sup>61</sup> NATO aircraft and 2,500 troops on alert in southeastern Turkey also provided a deterrent when UN agencies and NGOs assumed responsibility for delivering humanitarian aid.<sup>62</sup> The weakness of the Iraqi military and the credible integration of air and ground forces by the United States and its allies against a conventional foe were critical to the success of Operation Provide Comfort.

The history of military intervention and coercion in Darfur does not include skill and resolve in the application of force, especially against the myriad of nonstate parties to the conflict. Twice the UN has authorized peacekeeping forces for the Darfur crisis. In June 2004, a UN Security Council resolution created the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS), a force of 7,500 soldiers and police from African nations tasked to monitor a verbal cease-fire agreement and to “provide a safe and secure environment for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees.”<sup>63</sup> Unfortunately, the mission’s mandate, rules of engagement, and numbers were completely inadequate to complete the task. Outgunned and underresourced, the mission could not even challenge rebel roadblocks as they tried to protect 34 refugee camps, some with over 120,000 inhabitants, in an area the size of France. The UN approved a second “hybrid” peacekeeping force of 20,600 AU and UN forces in August 2006 to augment AMIS with greater numbers and a stronger mandate, but the group had difficulty protecting itself, let alone refugees.<sup>64</sup> In September 2007, AU forces ran out of ammunition as hundreds of rebels in trucks overran their base in eastern Darfur, seizing tons of supplies and heavy weapons.<sup>65</sup> For future military instruments to be successful in Darfur, they will have to overcome pessimism created by years of unwillingness by the international community to move beyond neutral peacekeeping and mediation in Sudan.

## **Operation Deny Flight**

UN peacekeeping operations in Bosnia also suffered from a deficit in credibility, but the United States and NATO were able to overcome the impotence of Operation Deny Flight with Operation Deliberate Force. Beginning in the summer of 1992, Serb aggression and support of an ethnic cleansing campaign by Bosnian Serbs inspired the UN to impose comprehensive sanctions against Serbia, deploy UN peacekeepers, and task NATO to enforce a no-fly zone within Bosnian airspace.<sup>66</sup> The use of force, however, even in defense of UN peacekeepers, was “highly circumscribed” during Operation Deny Flight, and Bosnian Serbs took advantage of the UN’s indecisiveness to gain territory and terrorize the civilian populace.<sup>67</sup> The fall of Muslim safe area Srebrenica, use of UN hostages to deter NATO reprisals, and potential for a UN withdrawal from Bosnia prompted the United States to lead an escalated air campaign against the Bosnian Serbs from August to December 1995.<sup>68</sup> Covert supply of Bosnian Muslims and air strikes strategically timed with Bosnian Muslim and Croatian ground offensives shifted the balance of territory in the region. Territorial losses and the prospect for removal of sanctions compelled Milosevic to negotiate terms to end the conflict.<sup>69</sup> The indictment of Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic for war crimes also enabled a US envoy to isolate the Bosnian Serb “spoilers” from cease-fire talks, which helped Americans negotiate and employ the Dayton peace accords.<sup>70</sup>

A key presumption that emerges from Operations Deny Flight and Deliberate Force is that timely air strikes and the indictment of war criminals can facilitate negotiations and the development of a viable cease-fire agreement. Two differences in the Darfur conflict make this generalization unlikely if the United States uses a similar strategy against the Sudanese government. For one, the Darfuris seek security guarantees and a greater share of national wealth, not independence from a greater Sudan. Second, a coercer must factor the related and potentially more destabilizing North-South conflict into any strategy for peace in Darfur.

**Differences in Objectives.** Independence was the objective of the parties in the Bosnian conflict. On 1 March 1992, a parliamentary majority of Muslim and Croatian delegates followed the lead of Slovenia and Croatia and voted for independence from Yugoslavia. Bosnian Serbs rejected the referendum and, dreading subjugation by Bosnian Muslims and Croats, executed their contingency plan for self-determination and seceded.<sup>71</sup> The expansion of regional boundaries and control of territory became the

primary goal of the three belligerent groups. The United States and its allies successfully coerced the Bosnian Serbs into accepting the terms of the Dayton accords, because combined air and ground offensives denied them the ability to achieve their goal. The effects of economic sanctions and indictments by the International Criminal Tribunal also isolated the Bosnian Serbs from their primary source of military strength, Serbia, and compelled Milosevic to act as a third-party coercer.<sup>72</sup> The objectives of independence and the control of territory were important aspects in the dynamics of coercion in the Bosnian war.

The objective of the Darfuris is not independence but physical protection, political access, and a greater share of national wealth. The rebellion is a reaction to the negligence of the Sudanese government, which failed to secure Darfuris from violent abuse by Arab tribes even before the government's tacit support of the *janjaweed*.<sup>73</sup> This negligence and "the hegemony of the northern and central elites to keep Darfur and other peripheral regions marginalized" form the core of Darfuri grievances.<sup>74</sup> Darfur, landlocked and overpopulated, has few natural resources and cannot survive as an independent country without significant help. Some argue the region is poorer today than it was in the late 1800s due to years of drought and overgrazing.<sup>75</sup> Ruling Arabs in North Sudan do not favor an independent Darfur because they need the predominantly Muslim population in the North to balance the Christian population in the South. The international community fears an independent Darfur because of the massive amount of aid and sponsorship it would require to sustain the region. Independence is not a viable option for major players in the Darfur conflict. Ultimately, the long-term survival of Darfuris depends on the cooperation and support of the Sudanese government, making it difficult to apply pressure to the ruling regime.

If the United States seeks to coerce al-Bashir's regime with airpower, the impending indictment of the Sudanese president for war crimes is also problematic.<sup>76</sup> The International Criminal Court's arrest warrant gives Sudan's president additional incentive to consolidate power and to resist demands that remotely threaten the stability of his regime. Since his indictment by the court, al-Bashir has expelled 13 aid organizations he accuses of abetting the international case against him.<sup>77</sup> The leader of Sudan's intelligence service recently called for the "amputation of the hands and the slitting of the throats" of Sudanese people who support the charges.<sup>78</sup> Al-Bashir's loss of control or his apprehension by a UN

operation could result in prosecution and humiliation at The Hague. The objective of al-Bashir is to remain in power, and the source of his power and influence—oil—is not susceptible to airpower.<sup>79</sup> In the case of Darfur, criminal indictment by the ICC conflicts with coercion strategies that seek concessions by al-Bashir and his government.

**Differences in Priorities.** Regional issues were certainly important factors in the negotiations to end the Bosnian war, but a resolution to the Bosnia conflict remained the priority of the United States and international community. Richard Holbrooke, the lead US negotiator at Dayton, was sympathetic to the plight of Albanians in Kosovo but believed addressing the topic was counterproductive to achieving a peace agreement.<sup>80</sup> Granted, Croatia's 1995 offensive in Krajina played a large role in America's strategy to end the Bosnian conflict. Territorial gains "strengthened Croatia as a strategic counterweight to Serbia" and helped NATO "forge a Croatian-Muslim alliance as a military counterweight to the Bosnian Serbs," but the United States directed its coercive efforts against Serbia for a resolution in Bosnia, not satellite conflicts in Croatia or Kosovo.<sup>81</sup>

In contrast, the Darfur conflict has historically been subordinate to the civil war in Sudan. In 2004, despite the violence and atrocities in Darfur, the policy of US, British, and Norwegian negotiators was to proceed with the CPA between North and South Sudan while the Darfur crisis remained unresolved.<sup>82</sup> The 2005 agreement established a "confederal system" of two regional governments: one in North Sudan dominated by al-Bashir's National Congress Party and a semiautonomous government in South Sudan controlled by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement.<sup>83</sup> The agreement includes a timetable for multiparty elections in 2009 and a referendum on southern independence in 2011.<sup>84</sup> The agreement also requires an equal distribution of oil revenues from the North to the South, which controls the vast majority of oil-producing territory. Last year, skirmishes along the border and the suspension of oil-revenue payments almost sparked a full-scale war, but cooler heads prevailed.<sup>85</sup> Upsetting the military balance between North and South Sudan with an intervention in Darfur could result in a larger, more deadly civil war with even greater humanitarian repercussions. Perhaps an aspect of the Bosnian conflict that is more enlightening is how the Dayton peace process and perceptions of neglect by the Kosovo Albanians led to violence in Kosovo and Operation Allied Force.<sup>86</sup> Military solutions for the Darfur crisis risk reigniting the North-South civil war.

## **Operation Allied Force**

The third and final analogy examined for the Darfur crisis is Operation Allied Force, which for many is one of the most successful air campaigns in history. In response to the violent persecution of Albanians in Kosovo, NATO initiated the air operation to coerce Milosevic into accepting the terms of failed negotiations at Rambouillet. The terms were “the Serbs out; NATO in; the refugees home; a cease-fire in place; and a commitment to work for a peace settlement.”<sup>87</sup> The operation lasted much longer than expected, and NATO aircraft were unable to stop the Serbs’ ethnic cleansing campaign; yet, after 78 days of air strikes, Milosevic succumbed to NATO’s demands. NATO was ultimately successful because air strikes demonstrated an ability to threaten the powerbase of Milosevic’s regime, and the Serbians were unable to inflict any substantial costs on the United States or its allies. The Kosovo conflict is a seductive analogy for proponents of military intervention in Darfur, because the United States led the operation “to confront a lesser humanitarian crisis” against “a more formidable adversary” and “not a single American died in combat.”<sup>88</sup> The key presumption is that it is possible for US airpower to extract concessions from an authoritarian regime with modest costs and without a strong commitment to ground forces. Two major differences between the Kosovo and Darfur crises make this presumption faulty: the source of power for al-Bashir’s regime is revenue from Sudan’s oil industry, not an industrialized economy, and international interest in Sudan’s oil reserves will make it difficult to isolate and coerce the regime.

**Differences in Powerbase.** To maintain order when under air attack and economic hardship, dictatorial regimes often use the media and repressive police and security forces to maintain order. Serbia’s leadership was no exception during Operation Allied Force, and Milosevic used Serbia’s political machine, media, and security forces to stoke Serb nationalism, eliminate independent media, and place disgruntled military leaders under house arrest.<sup>89</sup> The engine for Milosevic’s powerbase and influence was Serbia’s industrial economy, which was especially vulnerable to systematic air strikes by an advanced air force.<sup>90</sup> The economically advanced society suffered years of economic sanctions due to the Bosnian war, and the prospects for reconstruction were meager because of international isolation. After a NATO summit in Washington, where leaders of the organization celebrated its 50th anniversary and renewed their resolve to win the Kosovo war, NATO expanded its coercion strategy and targeted the powerbase of Milosevic’s regime.<sup>91</sup> By the



end of April 1999, air strikes cut Serbia's economy in half, and on 28 May, 80 percent of Serbians lost electrical power due to the destruction of power facilities in Serbia's three largest cities.<sup>92</sup> NATO's willingness to escalate the conflict and severely threaten Serbia's industrial economy played a large role in the coercion of Milosevic and the success of Operation Allied Force.

Al-Bashir's National Congress Party and northern elites also use an extensive party organization, politicized national civil service, and hundreds of thousands of agents and informants to maintain security and power in Sudan. A bureaucracy of over two million Sudanese control the day-to-day operations of the state, but unlike Milosevic in 1999, al-Bashir's regime uses billions of dollars in oil revenues to tend and influence its elite constituency.<sup>93</sup> Sudan's five billion barrels of proven oil reserves and potential for much more also insulate the country from international economic pressures.<sup>94</sup> Despite harsh unilateral sanctions by the United States, Sudan's economy grows almost 10 percent a year.<sup>95</sup> Since 1998, al-Bashir has focused on developing Sudan's oil wealth, and his vision has helped the regime accomplish its primary objective of staying in power. Sitting on top of a fortune while facing criminal indictment abroad and retaliation at home, al-Bashir's regime is "prepared to kill anyone, suffer massive civilian casualties, and violate every international norm of human rights to stay in power."<sup>96</sup> Unless strikes are concurrent with an oil embargo supported by the rest of the international community, the government of Sudan will prove extremely difficult to coerce with airpower, because air strikes and no-fly zones do little to threaten Sudan's most valuable natural resource.

**Differences in Political Isolation.** In addition to economic vulnerability, diplomatic isolation prevented Milosevic and his regime from executing an effective countercoercion strategy against NATO during Operation Allied Force. Despite the breakup of Yugoslavia, the Bosnian war, and years of economic sanctions, Milosevic probably expected the plight of Serbia to arouse sympathy in Russia, a fellow Slav and Orthodox country. To Milosevic's dismay, Russian president Boris Yeltsin never gave him anything beyond verbal support during the Kosovo war for several reasons. Yeltsin and other Russian officials did not personally like Milosevic. They were tired of his making promises he could not keep and never forgave him for his support of the 1991 coup against Yeltsin and Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev.<sup>97</sup> Russia's reputation and economy were also too weak to risk a costly confrontation with the West or provide Serbia with advanced antiaircraft missiles to "massacre" NATO aircraft.<sup>98</sup> Both Yeltsin and Milosevic expected

the NATO coalition to fracture as the war dragged on, but NATO's resolve hardened, along with talk of NATO expansion. Three weeks into the air war, Yeltsin appointed Viktor Chernomyrdin, a former premier with strong ties with the United States, to negotiate an end to the war. He was not fond of Milosevic, and after negotiating a peace plan with the G-7, Chernomyrdin traveled to Belgrade and coldly told Milosevic to accept the proposal or air strikes would escalate.<sup>99</sup> NATO's growing strength and ability to attack Serbia with impunity compelled Milosevic's only ally to act as a third-party coercer on behalf of NATO. Russia's abandonment of Serbia and Serbia's isolation from the rest of the international community were critical to Milosevic's acceptance of G-7 demands.

Al-Bashir has stronger ties with the international community, primarily because of extensive foreign investment in Sudan's oil sector and the potential for billions of dollars in additional development. Despite extensive economic sanctions by the United States, numerous countries invest in Sudan, including Arab countries and several of America's allies. France, Jordan, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sweden, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom all have equity stakes in Sudan's oil blocks.<sup>100</sup> India and Malaysia also have large investments in the country, but Sudan's most powerful political and diplomatic partner is China.

In 1959 Sudan was the fourth African nation to recognize the People's Republic of China. The countries have had a good relationship ever since, and in 1994, al-Bashir invited Chinese companies to develop Sudan's nascent oil sector.<sup>101</sup> China accepted the offer and nurtured a relationship with Sudan beneficial to both countries. China used Sudan as a bridgehead for investments in the rest of Africa. Sudan rapidly developed its oil industry and used the proceeds to strengthen state security and procure weapons. China's \$8 billion in pipeline, refineries, and basic infrastructure is a substantial incentive to support a strong and stable Sudanese government. China uses its position on the UN Security Council to soften initiatives that could weaken al-Bashir's regime and to abide by Beijing's philosophy of noninterference in the domestic affairs of sovereign states.<sup>102</sup>

Mismatches between the rhetoric and enforcement of UN resolutions after the Darfur atrocities highlight the difficulty of using economic sanctions and political isolation as instruments to erode al-Bashir's powerbase. The first UN resolution written specifically for Darfur is Resolution 1556 (30 July 2004), which required the Sudanese government to disarm the *janjaweed* in 30 days. The only enforcement mechanism in the resolution

was to impose an arms embargo against the Darfur region, not against Sudan itself. Little changed in March 2005 when the Security Council passed Resolution 1591, which applied travel bans against four antagonists on both sides of the conflict but did not condemn or extend sanctions to the Sudanese government or the oil industry.<sup>103</sup> China, Russia, and the Arab League opposed America's stronger proposals because of economic self-interests and skepticism of humanitarian arguments that the United States and others could use to encroach on their national sovereignty.<sup>104</sup> Unless the security and humanitarian situation changes drastically in Sudan, the United States will find it difficult to apply effective coercive measures against al-Bashir's regime, especially since the international community was unwilling to condemn the Sudanese government immediately after the height of atrocities in Darfur.

### **Policy Implications for Darfur**

Operations Provide Comfort, Deny Flight, and Allied Force are seductive analogies for proponents of a humanitarian intervention in Darfur because these campaigns featured suffering refugees and the successful coercion of a malevolent dictator with a preponderance of airpower. Using these operations as analytical tools to determine the political initiative required for a humanitarian response in Darfur is imprudent, however. The wide range of actors, competing interests, relatively low priority of the Darfur crisis, and the unfavorable geopolitical landscape make it tough to generate the international consensus necessary for a legitimate military intervention. Several influential nations, including China, invest heavily in Sudan's oil industry and prefer a strong and stable Sudanese government to ensure a reasonable return on their investments. Compelling powerful China in 2009 to turn its back on its gateway to the African continent will be much more difficult than convincing the comparatively weak Russia to ditch Milosevic in 1999. The hypocrisies of US intervention in Iraq and its subsequent overextension in the Middle East also propel lesser powers and the Arab League to oppose international activism and the abuse of the "responsibility to protect" to justify interventions.<sup>105</sup> Still others are opposed to military solutions to the Darfur crisis because of potential damage to the North-South peace process and the threat to humanitarian aid operations. Due to conditions internal and external to the Darfur conflict, the United States will have to expend considerable amounts of political

capital, significantly more than in the 1990s, to secure UN or even NATO approval for a humanitarian intervention using military forces.

	<b>Synopsis of Conflict</b>	<b>Key Presumptions</b>	<b>Likenesses to a Military Intervention in Darfur</b>	<b>Differences from Darfur Conflict</b>
<b>Operation Provide Comfort (Iraq)</b>	A broad coalition of states defended Kurdish refugees from Iraqi forces and aided their safe return to Kurdistan.	A similar operation could aid Darfuri refugees in Chad.	The international coalitions confronted incompetent governments that used racial or ethnic identities to divide, control, and oppress their populations.	Return of Darfuri refugees is not a vital interest to the United States and its allies.  The international community has not demonstrated the desire or ability to apply force effectively in Sudan.
<b>Operation Deny Flight (Bosnia)</b>	Economic sanctions, legal, indictments, and air strikes strategically timed with Muslim and Croat ground offensives compelled Milosevic to negotiate with NATO.	Timely air strikes and indictments could aid cease-fire negotiations in Darfur.	Low strategic interests, competing coalition objectives, and elusive nonstate actors posed significant challenges in the coercion of the targeted governments.	The objective of the Darfuris is not independence but physical protection, political access, and a greater share of national wealth.  Concerns about the Darfur conflict are subordinate to the resolution of the North-South civil war.
<b>Operation Allied Force (Kosovo)</b>	While suffering zero combat casualties, a massive air operation compelled Milosevic to withdraw Serb forces from Kosovo.	Airpower can extract concessions with modest costs and without a strong commitment of ground forces.	The coalitions used two coercive mechanisms: denial and power-base erosion.  The coalitions used three coercive instruments: airpower, economic sanctions, and political isolation.	Sudan does not have an advanced industrial economy that is sensitive to air strikes.  Sudan in 2009 is not as politically isolated as Serbia in the 1990s.

**Figure 2. Similarities and differences between Darfur and analogous humanitarian operations.**

Theoretically, the United States could act unilaterally and hope a large portion of the international community or the UN blesses the operation retroactively, as in Kosovo. Perhaps President Obama and his secretary of state believe a true no-fly zone and nothing more is sufficiently benign to resist international criticism, yet is imposing it enough to prevent the

Sudanese government and its proxies from terrorizing villages in Darfur?<sup>106</sup> A small demonstration of American airpower compelled Iraqi security forces to leave Zakho in Kurdistan; why would not a similar demonstration work against the *janjaweed* in Darfur?<sup>107</sup> The problem in Darfur is that a no-fly zone would provide no compelling reason for the *janjaweed* to leave. The offensive advantages provided by explosive 50-gallon drums kicked out the back of a cargo plane are relatively minor, even against defenseless villages. It is easy enough for the local Arab tribes, militia, and Chadian rebels that comprise the *janjaweed* to remain where they are, with or without American aircraft flying overhead. Their only alternative is to become refugees themselves. A no-fly zone is not imposing enough to convince people to leave what they perceive to be their homeland.

Maybe the “no-fly zone” advocated by President Obama is more than that. Perhaps he intends to follow the advice of the US ambassador to the United Nations and sprinkle air strikes on Khartoum and on air bases to compel al-Bashir’s regime to reign in the destabilizing *janjaweed*.<sup>108</sup> The problem is who will do the reigning in? The regime enlisted the help of the *janjaweed* in 2003 to conduct its counterinsurgency campaign because it did not have the military forces to do so itself. There is no reason to believe it does now, either. Maybe the advocates of extensive air strikes believe that the devastation could be costly enough to compel al-Bashir to try a little harder. If so, their hopes are unfounded. Sudan’s extensive oil reserves are perfectly safe underground, and air operations targeting the *janjaweed*, when they can be found, will do little to threaten the regime. In addition, the indictment of al-Bashir for crimes against humanity and overtures for “regime change” fail to assure the president that the cost of capitulation is acceptable, no matter how devastating the air attacks. Unless it is prepared to remove al-Bashir with brute force using friendly ground forces or rebel proxies, the United States will have to offer the president a credible alternative to surrender for an air campaign to be successful.<sup>109</sup>

In addition to the meager prospects of success, the costs associated with the employment of coercive airpower in Darfur could be enormous. The Sudanese will execute counterstrategies to neutralize threats and to create problems for the United States and opposing forces.<sup>110</sup> The presence of thousands of humanitarian aid workers, two million displaced persons, a precarious peace with South Sudan, and extensive economic ties with China provide Sudan an excellent deterrent. If deterrence fails, the regime has numerous ways to create pandemonium and threaten the

efficacy and domestic support for the intervention. The recent expulsion of relief organizations that provide 40 percent of the aid in Darfur and lack of response by the United Nations is a relevant example.<sup>111</sup> The desire to recycle airpower strategies in Darfur and the execution of counterstrategies by al-Bashir's regime could spin Sudan out of control and put the Obama administration in the unenviable position of having to explain to the American public how a few good intentions led to a catastrophe.<sup>112</sup>

Instead of risking escalation and disaster to reconcile past injustices, America's strategy in Sudan should focus on the future. In accordance with the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, Sudan will conduct multiparty elections in 2009 and a referendum in 2011 to determine whether South Sudan will secede. Should South Sudan split from the rest of the country, which most likely it will, North Sudan will lose 80 percent of its proven oil reserves, a vastly more credible threat to al-Bashir than air strikes.<sup>113</sup> Blocking South Sudan's vote for independence, contesting the results, or suspending oil revenues is tantamount to war, and the subsequent carnage could dwarf that of the Darfur conflict. The United States needs to provide positive inducements and assurances that the 2009 and 2011 elections are in the best interest of the Sudanese government. Allowing China to pass a Security Council resolution to defer the indictment of al-Bashir is a good place to start. The indictment is counterproductive and does little to deter the parties in the conflict from conducting operations they deem necessary for their survival.<sup>114</sup> The United States could also offset the losses in revenue anticipated by the secession of South Sudan by lifting sanctions, allowing Sudan access to US oil refining technology, and facilitating Sudan's exploitation of petroleum resources in the Red Sea.<sup>115</sup> Incrementally, providing positive incentives for implementing the CPA and removing Sudan from America's list of state sponsors of terror will do more to alleviate the atrocities in Darfur than would any no-fly zone.

## **Conclusion**

The international community should never forget the tragic events in Darfur, but the Obama administration should not let past atrocities and compelling historical analogies cloud its judgment on the efficacy of airpower coercion in Sudan. Operations Provide Comfort, Deliberate Force,

and Allied Force were highly successful in compelling Saddam and Milosevic to succumb to pressure from US airpower, but conditions internal and external to the conflicts were vital to their success. With Russia in decline and NATO expanding, conditions were favorable for the United States and its allies to apply pressure to Saddam, Milosevic, and their supporters. Today, Sudan's political ally, China, is in ascent, while the US military is busy conducting two full-scale occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Despite President Obama's campaign proclamations and his appointment of retired major general J. Scott Gration as special envoy to Sudan, the administration will find that generating the political momentum and consensus necessary for a legitimate military intervention will be a major challenge.<sup>116</sup>

International consensus aside, it is still doubtful a no-fly zone or air strikes could repeat the successes from northern Iraq and Serbia in Darfur. The source of power and influence of al-Bashir and his extensive state apparatus is oil, an underground resource that is resistant to the effects of airpower in the long term. When threatened, al-Bashir can use the tentative peace of Sudan's civil war, upcoming elections, and two million internally displaced persons as a deterrent. US military intervention and the failure of that deterrent could spark another civil war, and in the words of one African diplomat, "If the North and South return to war, it will unlock the gates of hell."<sup>117</sup> This is hardly the objective of airpower for peace enforcement, and the United States does not have the desire or capability to play games of brinkmanship with al-Bashir. The United States needs to give al-Bashir tangible assurances that cooperation with the international community will result in his survival, a pledge that American airpower cannot provide. ■■■

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# Coercive Engagement

## A Security Analysis of Iranian Support to Iraqi Shia Militias

*Christopher Forrest, Major, USAF*

ACCORDING TO the *US Air Force Posture Statement 2008*, at any given moment the USAF has more than 26,000 Airmen deployed to fight the global war on terrorism.<sup>1</sup> Of those deployed, over 6,200 directly support the land component commander by filling “in lieu of” taskings with the US Army.<sup>2</sup> While deployed to the Central Command area of responsibility, our Airmen face a growing tactical threat from increasingly hostile and deadly attacks from Iraqi Shia militia groups such as the Mahdi Army and the Badr Brigade. These groups are directly and indirectly supported by Iran. Iran’s support to the Shia militias in Iraq has both tactical- and strategic-level implications to US security policy. This article addresses the issue in earnest and provides the reader with increased knowledge and understanding of this complex relationship in addition to providing sound policy prescriptions to deal with this growing security threat.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, as the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union were crumbling, the United States found itself in the unique position of being a lone superpower in an international system that was quickly shifting from bipolarity to unipolarity. This did not mean, however, that US preeminence would be forever guaranteed, and events in the 1990s and the early years of the new millennium brought new security challenges as the country faced the growing threat of terrorism from abroad. Today, the United States finds itself engaged in the Middle East as never before, fighting dual wars in Afghanistan and Iraq while simultaneously attempting to maintain its unipolar status in the international system.

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Increasingly, however, other states across the globe are seeking to balance the power of the United States and establish themselves as regional power bases. Iran is one such state. Its prior history with the United States, its nuclear ambitions, its proclivity to support terrorism, and its proximity to a fragile Iraq make it a growing security concern that the United States must address.

Clearly, Iran's historic ties to terror and its active support of Iraqi Shia militias today present the United States with a security challenge that must be addressed. At the same time, however, the recent invasion and occupation of Iraq limit US response options. The United States now faces a tactical problem regarding Iranian support to hostile Shia militias in Iraq and a strategic problem in how to deal with the disruption in the balance of power in the region. Seymour Hersh comments that "the crux of the Bush administration's strategic dilemma is that its decision to back a Shiited government after the fall of Saddam has empowered Iran and made it impossible to exclude Iran from the Iraqi political scene."<sup>3</sup> It is against this strategic context that this article analyzes and addresses Iranian support for Iraqi Shia militia groups and appropriate US security policy responses.

The security challenge posed by Iran has many fronts that need to be dealt with collectively as part of an integrated security strategy. However, when looking at the aggregate security challenge it is easy to misassess or misanalyze fundamental aspects of individual security issues such as Iranian nuclear efforts or Iranian support for terror. To better understand these issues, one must temporarily separate them from the aggregate and analyze them in depth, looking for root causes, courses of action, and possible policy prescriptions before returning to the big picture. As part of this effort, this article focuses on the security challenge posed by Iranian support for terrorism, specifically its support of Iraqi Shia militias. In doing so, it poses the following research questions: *What causes the Iranian government to provide material and economic support for Shia militias in Iraq? What is the most appropriate US security policy response?*

To answer these questions, the article is divided into three sections, each centered on a sub-question or analytical area:

1. What explains the variation in the degree and strength of Iranian (and presumably Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps) support for armed groups like the Badr Brigade and the Mahdi Army?

2. In what ways, or through which vehicles, would Iran be most likely to lend its support to Iraqi Shia militia groups?
3. Regarding Iran, what is the most appropriate US security policy response?

These questions frame the overall article and provide theoretical and analytical insight into this complex issue.

The security challenge posed by Iranian support of Iraqi Shia militias cannot be viewed as simply a tactical problem that can be addressed through military and intelligence means alone. A kinetic-only approach will not be sufficient to solve this challenge. To gain an accurate understanding of the greater security picture, one must look at three interrelated forces at work: the US-Iranian relationship and related policies; *the Iranian-Iraqi relationship* and resulting support/influence in Iraqi affairs; and the security and strategic implications of Iraqi Shia groups (both violent and nonviolent) on the United States. For example, the turbulent history between the United States and Iran creates mutual feelings of insecurity and vulnerability. Changes in the regional balance of power affect this relationship. Furthermore, these factors have a direct effect on the strength of Iranian support for Iraqi Shia militias and must be accounted for when considering the overall security challenge. It must be stressed, however, that Iranian actions must also be viewed as partly independent of the US-Iranian relationship. Iran has strong internal rationale for some of its policy actions and may choose certain courses of action *independent* of US or Iraqi actions. In short, its security policy should *not* be viewed as wholly reactive to US or Iraqi action.

One must also consider the nature of support that Iran lends to various Shia groups in Iraq. This support can best be categorized as *direct* and *indirect*. Direct support consists mostly of funding, weapons, intelligence, and training that flow almost exclusively to Iraqi Shia militias such as the Badr Brigade and the Mahdi Army. This type of support represents a significant tactical security threat to the United States and its forces deployed in the region. While direct support is widely discussed and debated in military and security policy circles, it is not the only type of support being offered by Iran. Iran also provides indirect support, which consists of funding, social work projects, and religious/political influence. It is mostly nonviolent and represents the bulk of Iranian soft power in the region. As such, it flows not only to the Iraqi Shia militias but also to numerous

social and civil Shia organizations in Iraq. As opposed to the tactical threat of direct support, this indirect support represents a strategic challenge to the United States as Iran attempts to gain more power and influence in Iraq and the region.

## Causes of Iranian Support

What explains the variation in the degree and strength of Iranian (and presumably Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps) support for armed groups like the Badr Brigade and the Mahdi Army? It is important to note that this question seeks to determine causation in levels of *varying* support, not whether there is any support at all. Established international relations (IR) theory and empirical evidence show that Iranian support is both likely and currently occurring, and it is assumed that realistically this support cannot be terminated altogether. As such, this question seeks to find the variables that will cause *changes* in *degrees* of support. With this in mind, I present the following hypothesis: *Increased levels of Iranian support are primarily caused by Iran's perception of the balance of power in the region and the perceived threat to its own security.*

### Cause #1: Perceived Changes in the Balance of Power

Iran's support for Iraqi Shia militias is partially explained by its perception of changes in the balance of power in the region. Iran desires to be, and sees itself as, a growing regional power. US efforts to stop this power growth are causing Iran to counter with increased support of the Shia militias inside Iraq. This causal factor draws heavily on the IR theory of structural realism, pioneered by Kenneth Waltz, as well as balance of threat theory by Stephen Walt. Using this construct, Waltz determines that in a unipolar system, such as exists today with US dominance, other states will engage in power-balancing activities in attempts to push the system away from unipolarity and to maximize their own powers.<sup>4</sup> He argues, "Aside from specific threats it may pose, unbalanced power leaves weaker states feeling uneasy and gives them reason to strengthen their positions," and "balances disrupted will one day be restored."<sup>5</sup> In this regard, Iranian support of Iraqi Shia militias can be seen as a logical attempt to balance what Iran sees as the unchecked power of the United States in the region. Iran's support of these militias is likely to increase if it sees an opportunity to take advantage of declining US power in the region and advance its own.

Stephen Walt builds on Waltz's argument and introduces the concept of balance of threat theory, which explains that a state is more likely to engage in power-balancing actions against states it sees as overtly threatening. This theory, in particular, offers insight into why Iran is offering support to Iraqi Shia militias. In a unipolar system, Iran sees the United States as a threat to its security interests in the region and will take actions to balance its power. One such action is to increase support to Iraqi Shia groups opposing the US presence in Iraq. Furthermore, Iran sees US presence and influence in Iraq as overtly threatening to its own security and will take actions, perhaps aggressively, to balance this threat.

By looking through the lens of structural realist theory, it becomes increasingly clear that the US invasion and occupation of Iraq opened up a strategic opportunity (and necessity) for Iran to balance US power in the region. Its support of Iraqi Shia militia groups, such as the Badr Brigade and the Mahdi Army, is a relatively high-benefit, low-cost method of increasing its own power at the expense of US power. Ted Carpenter and Malou Innocent argue that "America's removal of Saddam Hussein as the principal strategic counterweight to Iran paved the way for an expansion of Iran's influence. The United States now faces the question of how it can mitigate potential threats to its interests if Iran succeeds in consolidating its new position as the leading power in the region."<sup>6</sup> They note that "prior to the Iraq War, traditional balance-of-power realists predicted that Iran would act to undermine America's position in occupied Iraq and be the principal geostrategic beneficiary from Iraq's removal as a regional counterweight. Neoconservatives predicted the Iranian regime would probably collapse and, even if it did not, Tehran would have no choice but to accept US dominance. But as a result of Washington's policy blunders, Iran is now a substantially strengthened actor."<sup>7</sup>

The desire to balance what Iran perceives as hostile US power in the region in part explains why the regime uses direct-support options. However, in addition to direct support, there is also strong evidence of indirect support to other social, civil, and political organizations in Iraq that serve a similar purpose.

In this regard, Iranian support is the result not only of its desire to balance US power, but also to *gain* power amongst its regional neighbors through the spread and influence of the Shia sect of Islam. Iran is the largest Shia country in the world with over 70 million people, 90 percent of whom are Shiite.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, many of its Muslim neighbors are Sunni.



To understand the potent difference between Sunni and Shia, one must look back to the early days of Islam and the confusion that reigned after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. After Muhammad died in AD 632, he was succeeded by Abu Bakr, the first of many caliphs chosen to lead the growing *ummah*, or Islamic community.<sup>9</sup> At the time, however, there was great debate about who should be the chosen successor to Muhammad; should it be a close relative that shared his divine characteristics or should it be a close friend and confidante who could ensure the *ummah* would be taken care of? This basic difference of opinion started in AD 632 and eventually grew to define the distinction between Sunni and Shia Islam. Karen Armstrong explains that “some believed that Muhammad would have wanted to be succeeded by Ali ibn Ali Talib, his closest male relative. In Arabia, where the blood tie was sacred, it was thought that a chief’s special qualities were passed down the line of his descendants, and some Muslims believed that Ali had inherited something of Muhammad’s special charisma.”<sup>10</sup> In AD 680 the Shiah i-Ali, or the “Partisans of Ali,” claimed that the second son of Ali ibn Abi Talib was the next rightful caliph. His second son, Hussain, traveled from Medina to Kufah with his army to take his place as the next rightful caliph but was slaughtered in Karbala along with his followers.<sup>11</sup> The Partisans of Ali soon became the core of Shia Islam and to this day remember the murder of Hussain in the deeply emotional ritual of Ashoura. Armstrong notes, “Like the murder of Ali, the Kerbala [*sic*] tragedy became a symbol for Shii Muslims of the chronic injustice that seems to pervade human life.”<sup>12</sup> This sentiment still echoes in today’s Shia and gives important insight into why Iranian Shia and Iraqi Shia are making such efforts to gain a voice in the politics of the region and to gain power. For example, Heinz Halm notes, “With the overthrow of the Ba’ath regime in Iraq through US-British military intervention in April 2003, the Iraqi Shi’ites are now drawing public attention to themselves; they demand their share of power hitherto withheld from them, and want a strong say in reshaping Iraq.”<sup>13</sup>

In his book, *The Shia Revival*, Vali Nasr explains the Sunni-Shia conflict that is shaping events in the region and gives us another lens with which to view Iranian support of Iraqi groups. He argues that an underlying reason for Iranian support is the desire to spread the “Shia revival,” which is identified “by the desire to protect and promote Shia identity.”<sup>14</sup> This revival is based in Iran, as it is historically the primary bastion of Shia Islam in a Muslim world dominated by Sunni power. In the early sixteenth century,

the Safavid Empire established itself in what is now modern-day Iran and for the first time put the Shia in a position of power. Commenting on this, Armstrong notes that “for the first time in centuries, a stable, powerful, and enduring Shii state had been planted right in the heart of Islamdom.”<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, “The establishment of a Shii empire caused a new and decisive rift between Sunnis and Shiis, leading to intolerance and an aggressive sectarianism that was unprecedented in the Islamic world.”<sup>16</sup>

Today, Nasr explains, “The Shia revival rests on three pillars: the newly empowered Shia majority in Iraq, the current rise of Iran as a regional leader, and the empowerment of Shias across Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, and Pakistan.”<sup>17</sup> Through the concept of an Iranian-led Shia revival, it is clear that Iran’s support of Iraqi Shia militias as well as other social and civil organizations is another attempt to balance power in the region. This power, however, is ideological and is directed just as much at neighboring Sunni influences as at the United States. Iran’s ideological ties to the Shia faith are strong. As a telling example of Iranian self-image and identification, a 2007 World Opinion Poll found that only 27 percent of Iranian respondents reported seeing themselves primarily as “a citizen of Iran,” while 62 percent reported seeing themselves primarily as a “member of my religion.”<sup>18</sup> While Iraqi Shia militias can and do pose a security threat to US forces, it would be a mistake to merely assume that their creation and Iranian support of their operations are designed solely to counter US power in the region. As Nasr explains, “Iran’s position also depends on the network of Kalashnikov-toting militias that form the backbone of Shia power represented by the web of clerics and centers of religious learning. . . . Shia militias project Shia power and enforce the will of the clerics.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, to understand Iran’s support of these militias from a balance-of-power perspective, one must also take into account the ideological aspect of the “Shia revival.”

## **Cause #2: The Perceived Security Threat (The Security Dilemma)**

Iran’s support for Iraqi Shia militia groups is also partially explained as the natural result of Iranian perceptions of the security threat it faces. In Iran’s eyes, the large number of US forces in the region, increasingly hostile US rhetoric, the arming of its proximate neighbors, and the lack of security for Shia groups in Iraq, all constitute significant threats to its security. In the face of such threats, Iran seeks to increase its own security by arming and supporting Iraqi Shia groups in hopes that this will decrease

its vulnerability. This causal factor draws heavily on Robert Jervis' concept of the security dilemma which can develop between two actors. Jervis describes the security dilemma as a cyclic process in which actions taken by one actor to increase its security may be perceived by the other actor as aggressive or threatening, causing that actor to take actions to strengthen its own security.<sup>20</sup> A point to emphasize about the dilemma is that it is based not only on objective events and actions but also on *subjective perceptions* by each actor. Jervis writes, "Decision makers act in terms of the vulnerability they feel, which can differ from the actual situation; we must therefore examine the decision maker's subjective security requirements."<sup>21</sup> In this light, US actions and policies should be viewed not only from the objective standpoint of how they alter Iran's actual security situation but also by how they affect Iran's subjective perceptions of its own security and vulnerability.

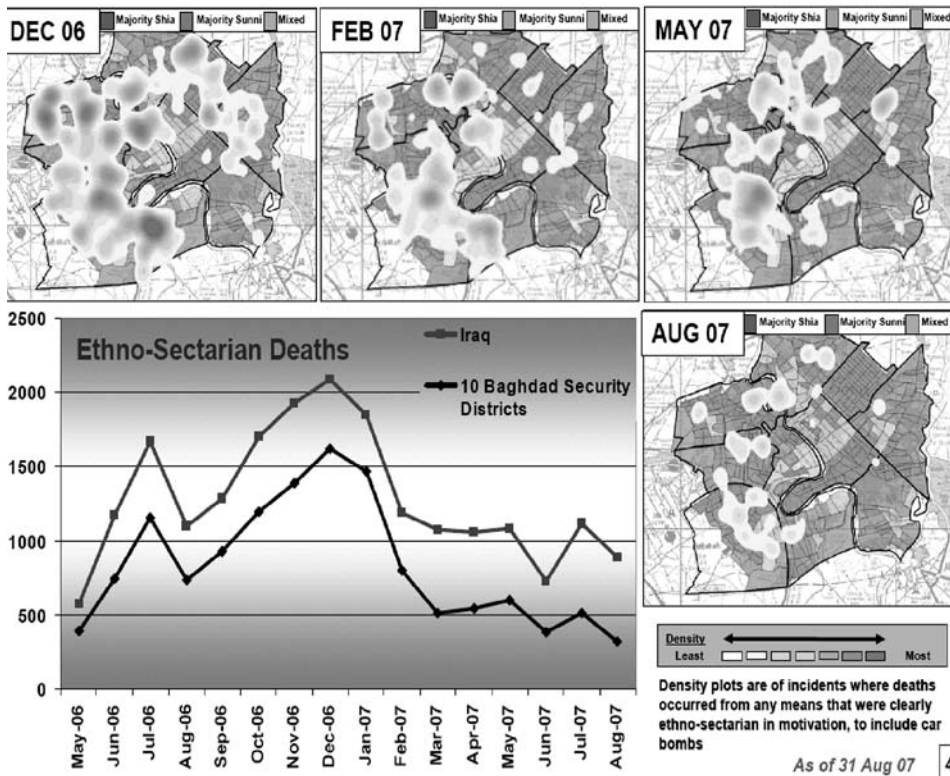
From an Iranian point of view, what might be perceived as a threat requiring additional security actions? Iran faces threats on three distinct fronts: large numbers of forward-deployed US forces in the region, increasing arms procurement by its neighboring states, and Sunni-Shia sectarian conflict in Iraq threatening its ideological foothold in that state. While the United States is slowly drawing down its forces in Iraq, it is likely that 150,000 forward-deployed, combat-capable soldiers in Iraq in close geographic proximity to Iran's western border are perceived as a legitimate security threat to the Iranian leadership.<sup>22</sup> For example, a January 2007 World Public Opinion Poll found that 73 percent of Iranians interviewed viewed US bases in the Middle East as a threat to Iran, with 44 percent responding that it was a "major" threat. Furthermore, 47 percent of respondents viewed bases in the region as US attempts to "achieve political and military domination to control Middle East resources." Only 10 percent of respondents viewed US bases and forces in the region as efforts to protect America from terrorists.<sup>23</sup>

The second threat Iran faces is from increasing arms procurements by its neighboring countries. US efforts to contain Iran have resulted in a steady and increasing flow of weapons and financial support from the United States to a number of Iran's geographic neighbors and rival Sunni states. In his January 2007 speech announcing the start of "surge" operations in Baghdad, President Bush announced that he would deploy an additional aircraft carrier group to the Persian Gulf and extend the deployment of Patriot antimissile batteries reportedly stationed in Kuwait and Qatar.<sup>24</sup> Along the same line, Vali Nasr and Ray Takeyh note that in May of 2007,

Vice President Dick Cheney announced a new direction of US foreign policy when he declared that “we’ll stand with others to prevent Iran from gaining nuclear weapons and dominating this region.”<sup>25</sup> As part of this new strategy, the US has provided a \$20 billion arms package to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf emirate states with the primary objective of enabling “these countries to strengthen their defenses and therefore to provide a deterrence against Iranian expansion and Iranian aggression in the future.”<sup>26</sup> In addition, the United States has sold the Saudis a number of sophisticated weapons systems, such as Apache helicopters, upgraded PAC-3 Patriot missiles, guidance systems, and theatre cruise missiles.<sup>27</sup> From an Iranian point of view, the rapid arms procurement by neighboring Sunni states must be perceived as an increased threat to its security.

Finally, the Sunni-Shia sectarian conflict raging in Iraq presents Iran with an ideological threat as it attempts to increase the spread and influence of the Shia sect of Islam in the region. Viewed in this light, Iran’s arming and support of Shia militias in Iraq can be seen as having two objectives: to counter US forces in the region and to protect and foster the growth of Iran’s ties to Shias in Iraq. In a sense, the Sunni-Shia conflict in Iraq is itself a smaller, *internal* security dilemma. Since Iraq’s government is extremely weak, little or no state security outside of American forces exists to control the sectarian violence.<sup>28</sup> With no government-provided security, it stands to reason that Iran would want to fund and support Shia militia groups to protect Iraqi Shia from Sunni insurgents. On this, Vali Nasr notes that “anger and anxiety also deepened distrust of the United States, which was seen as pressing Shias to disband much needed militias while failing to protect ordinary Shias from ex-Ba’athist and Sunni extremist violence.”<sup>29</sup> Commenting further on the relationship between security and Shia militias, Lt Gen Michael Maples, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, noted in a February 2007 briefing to the Senate Armed Services Committee, “Insecurity rationalizes and justifies militias—in particular Shi’a militias, which increase fears in the Sunni-Arab community. The result is additional support, or at least acquiescence, to insurgents and terrorists such as al-Qaeda in Iraq. Shi’a militants, most notably Jaish al-Mahdi, also are responsible for the increase in violence.”<sup>30</sup> In this regard, it is most likely that Iran’s arming and support of these Shia militias would tend to increase with a decreased security situation in Iraq. Likewise, improvements in the security situation of Iraqi Shias would most likely cause a decreased need for Shia militia groups and encourage Iran to shift support

to other areas (i.e., indirect-support avenues). Graphical evidence of this argument can be seen in figure 1, which depicts levels and trends in ethno-sectarian violence in Baghdad from December 2006 to August 2007.



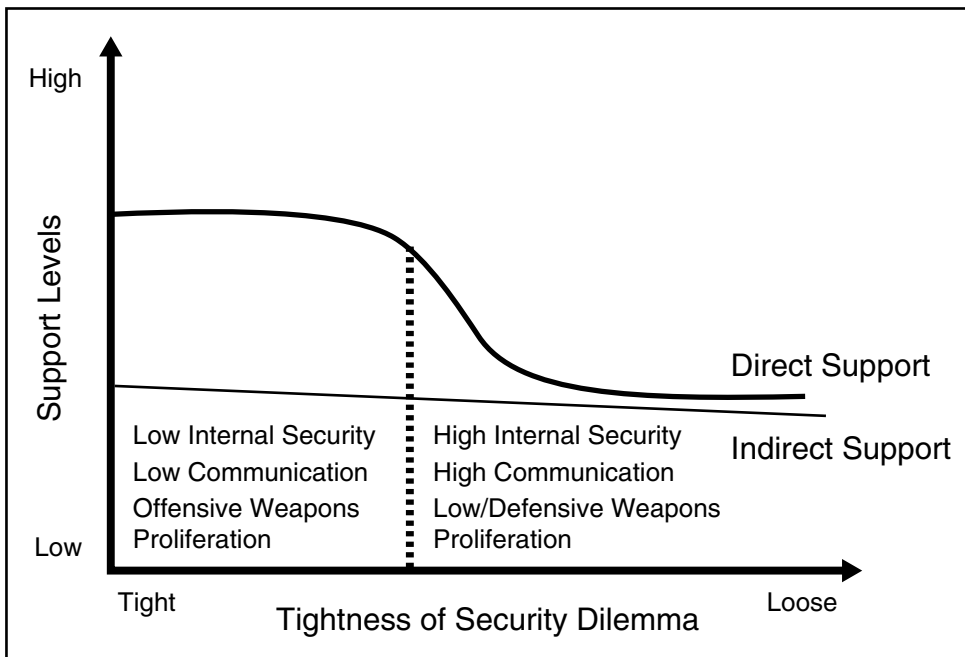
**Figure 1. Ethno-sectarian violence.** (Reprinted from *Annual Threat Assessment*, Hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee, 27 February 2007, [http://www.odni.gov/testimonies/20070227\\_transcript.pdf](http://www.odni.gov/testimonies/20070227_transcript.pdf).)

The graph depicts two significant findings. First, it shows the clear self-separation of Iraqi Shia and Sunni groups across Baghdad, a characteristic not present before 2003. Second, it shows a steadily decreasing trend in ethno-sectarian violence that is coincident in timing with the US surge operation in January 2007 and heightened US counterinsurgency efforts in the city. While, correlation does not necessarily equal causation, the coincidental timing of an increased security situation in Baghdad and lower levels of ethno-centric violence suggest that, as the security dilemma predicts, there is a connection between central government security and the arming and use of independent militias.

In sum, both theory and real-world observations show that Iranian support for Iraqi Shia militias is partly explained as a rational reaction to its

perceived security situation. This support challenges US military dominance and supports Iran's overall goal of regional power growth.

Thus far, I have identified two major variables that I argue will affect levels of Iranian support to Iraqi Shia militias: balance of power and security threat. But how will these variables work to affect overall levels of support—what will cause these levels to change over time? Figure 2 shows the predicted interaction of the two variables and the resulting change in direct and indirect support levels.



**Figure 2. Iranian support level**

Regarding the balance-of-power variable, Iran is most likely to increase levels of support when it sees a strategic opportunity to balance US power. Furthermore, due to Iran's *internal* desire to become a strategic and ideological power in the region, it is evident that, to some degree, there will be continuous indirect support of various Iraqi groups, violent and nonviolent. In addition to baseline indirect support, Iran is also making a logical cost-benefit decision to provide direct support to Iraqi Shia militias to increase its security situation in the face of multiple perceived threats. Key factors that would cause Iran to *increase* this support are based on the three main threat categories detailed above (US troop presence, arming of its

neighbors, and lack of Iraqi internal security). Higher levels of aggressive rhetoric combined with heightened US force postures in the region cause Iran to feel more vulnerable to US attack, thus prompting Iran to increase support to anti-US Shia militias in Iraq.<sup>31</sup> Likewise, as Iran sees its neighbors gaining weapons and increasing their security, it feels compelled to increase its own security and make more asserted attempts to establish a Shia stronghold in Iraq. Finally, if Iran perceives that Iraqi Shia groups are increasingly vulnerable to Sunni attack due to a lack of internal security, it will increase its arming and support of Shia militias. By combining the two variables, balance of power and security threat, one can see that aggregate Iranian support levels are subject to degrees of variance (fig. 2), but that this variance occurs against a baseline support level that can only minimally be changed through outside influence, such as changes in US security policy. The policy implications of this finding will be further discussed later. Now armed with a detailed analysis of the *causes* of Iranian support, it is necessary to detail what types of support are being offered and to which Iraqi organizations the support is going.

### **Types and Methods of Support**

The State Department's *Country Report on Terrorism 2006* labels Iran as the "most active state sponsor of terrorism."<sup>32</sup> Indeed, Iran has held this dubious distinction for many years as it has actively supported Hezbollah, HAMAS, and other terrorist groups as part of its foreign policy. In addition, Iranian activity inside Iraq predates the current Iraqi conflict and has its roots in the Iran-Iraq war, which gave birth to the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) as well as other splinter groups seeking to destabilize Iraq. For the purposes of analysis, however, I focus only on the relevant groups operating inside Iraq today. While Iran provides both direct and indirect support, this article is primarily concerned with direct support, as this constitutes the largest and most direct security threat to the United States. However, an analysis of indirect support is also relevant, as it provides further evidence of Iran's desire for regional power growth and its ideological desires to expand Shia Islam into Iraq. In the end, the empirical data provides evidence of both types of support. Of note, however, specific details of Iranian direct support and the linkages to government knowledge and assistance in providing that support are weak and wanting of hard data points for analysis. At the same time, there is enough

relevant evidence available to draw the conclusion that Iran's support and influence in Iraq is substantial and worthy of concern to US security interests in the region.

### **Direct Support: Recipients**

The two primary recipients of Iranian direct support are the Mahdi Army and the Badr Brigade. These two groups are the most influential and largest Iraqi Shia militias operating today. The Mahdi Army is led by the Iraqi Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. From the start, al-Sadr organized his political party and his militia to combat US forces in Iraq and to gain power for the Shia. Commenting on the branding of al-Sadr's militia, Nasr writes that "after the fall of Saddam in Iraq the firebrand cleric Muqtada al-Sadr names his militia the Mahdi Army (Jaish al-Mahdi), clearly implying that his cause was that of the Twelfth Imam, and those who fought him were the enemies of the promised Mahdi who went into occultation over a millennium ago."<sup>33</sup> This type of branding is not lost on the Shia of Iran and Iraq and provides al-Sadr with a potent historical symbol of Shia power and faith. Reference to the Mahdi harks back to AD 874 when the 11th Imam, Hasan al-Askari, died and his son was said to have gone into hiding to save his life, thus becoming known as "the Hidden Imam." In AD 934 it was announced that the Hidden Imam has gone into "occultation" in a transcendent realm and will only reveal himself when the time of justice has begun.<sup>34</sup> This event gave rise to the "Twelver Shias" who believe that the 12th Imam, or Mahdi, will reveal himself and lead the Shia to power once again. Heinz Halm further explains that "the occultation of the twelfth Imam presented the Shi'a with a difficult question: namely, who should lead the community until the return of the Imam Mahdi?"<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, he notes that in Islamic history it is not uncommon for Shia extremists to use the lore of the 12th Imam for their own interests and power.<sup>36</sup> This is clearly what al-Sadr is trying to accomplish with the Mahdi Army.

Beginning in 2003, al-Sadr used the Mahdi Army effectively to shape events in Iraq and even waged limited direct firefights with US forces. In a 2007 Congressional Research Report to Congress, Kenneth Katzman provided a detailed summary and analysis of these events. He wrote:

The December 6, 2006, Iraq Study Group report says the Mahdi Army might now number about 60,000 fighters. The Mahdi Army's ties to Iran are less well-developed than are those of the Badr Brigades because the Mahdi Army was formed by



Sadr in mid-2003, after the fall of Saddam Hussein. U.S. military operations put down Mahdi Army uprisings in April 2004 and August 2004 in “Sadr City” (a Sadr stronghold in Baghdad), Najaf, and other Shiite cities. In each case, fighting was ended with compromises under which Mahdi forces stopped fighting in exchange for amnesty for Sadr himself. Since August 2004, Mahdi fighters have patrolled Sadr City and, as of August 2007, are increasingly challenging SICI, Iraqi government forces, and U.S. and British forces for control of such Shiite cities as Diwaniyah, Nassiriyah, Basra, and Amarah. In order not to become a target of the U.S. “troop surge” in Baghdad, Sadr himself has been in Iran for much of the time since March 2007.<sup>37</sup>

As the above text demonstrates, previous actions by the Mahdi Army show that not only is it a threat to US interests in Iraq but that Iran also holds sway over al-Sadr himself and has provided sanctuary and support when necessary.

The other significant Iraqi Shia militia group is the Badr Brigade. This militia group, led by brothers Baquer and Abdul-Aziz Hakim, is the military arm of SCIRI and has significant historical ties to Iran. These two brothers are the sons of one of Iraq’s leading ayatollahs in the 1960s and fled to exile in Iran in the 1980s during the Iran-Iraq war. They took sanctuary in Tehran and Qom, where they formed the terrorist group SCIRI under the watchful eye of Iranian clerics. During the war, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) formed and trained the Badr Brigade.<sup>38</sup> Now, the Badr Brigade falls under control of Iraq’s newly powerful Shia political party, the Supreme Islamic Council of Iraq (SICI). Of note, SICI is the direct descendent of SCIRI, and many authors use these terms interchangeably. Katzman wrote:

SICI controls a militia called the “Badr Brigades” (now renamed the “Badr Organization”), which numbers about 20,000 but which has now purportedly burrowed into the still fledgling Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), particularly the National Police. The Badr Brigades were trained and equipped by Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, and politically aligned with Iran’s hardliners, during the Iran-Iraq war. During that war, Badr guerrillas conducted forays from Iran into southern Iraq to attack Baath Party officials, although the Badr forays did not spark broad popular unrest against Saddam Hussein’s regime. Badr fighters in and outside the ISF have purportedly been involved in sectarian killings, although to a lesser extent than the “Mahdi Army” of Moqtada Al Sadr.<sup>39</sup>

While the Badr Brigade may have a lower profile in terms of attacks on US forces in Iraq, its ties to Iran are significantly stronger, and it can be assumed that any outside support it receives is the result of Iranian actions.

While these two groups represent the bulk of Iranian direct support recipients and together pose one of the larger security threats to US forces in Iraq, it is also important to understand their differences. Each group receives some level of funding and support from Iran but in different ways. Iranian support of al-Sadr and the Mahdi Army consists mostly of political influence and sanctuary (with some reported arms transfers as well). Iranian support for the Badr Brigade, however, is more closely tied with actions taken by the IRGC and thus can be assumed to be mostly military in nature. While both groups are run by Shia leaders, each has its own sphere of influence in Iraq and its own idea of what a future political solution in that country should look like. Al-Sadr primarily rules from the poorer areas of Baghdad (where “Sadr City” is located) and tends to push for the creation of a loose federal Iraqi government. SICI and the Badr Brigade, however, are entrenched in the south of Iraq, in Basra. Commenting on this, Nasr notes that “while Sadr was exploring his prospects by throwing his poorly trained militia into pitched battles with U.S. troops, SCIRI was making up for the time lost to its twenty-year Iranian exile by rapidly assembling support in the Shia south, with Iranian and Hezbollah help. A special focus of SCIRI’s interest was Basra, where the Badr Brigade quickly became the *de facto* government.”<sup>40</sup> While in Basra, SICI (aka SCIRI) consolidated its political power, won six of eight Shia-majority governorates, and even came in first in Baghdad with 40 percent of the vote.<sup>41</sup> The SICI’s idea of an Iraqi political solution, however, is for separate autonomous zones, thus firmly establishing its (and Shia) power in the south of Iraq. Understanding the similarities and differences of these Shia militia groups and their aligned political parties is important because it demonstrates that Iran has multiple options when choosing to allocate its support. The type and strength of support (or potentially non-support) may vary based on Iran’s assessment of how best to achieve its goals of power growth in Iraq and the region.

### **Direct Support: Methods and Vehicles**

Iran provides direct support through a number of vehicles. Some of these vehicles transmit financial funds to the militias, such as the Iranian Bank Saderat. Other vehicles such as the IRGC and its special operations branch, the Qods Force, provide military arms, training, and intelligence. Iran also provides persistent ideological and political support. Of all these vehicles, however, perhaps the most pervasive and effective method of

support is through the IRGC. The IRGC, which also controls the Iranian *Basij* volunteer militia, is fiercely loyal to the political hardliners and enforces strict Islamic customs inside Iran. Outside of Iran, the IRGC operates as the primary force dedicated to training, equipping, and supporting various foreign terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and the Badr Brigade.<sup>42</sup> As part of Iran's overall military capabilities, the IRGC essentially stands as an autonomous mini-military force within the larger force structure. Iran's total military force equals roughly 545,000 troops, with the IRGC accounting for one-third of the total, or 182,000 troops. The IRGC, however, has its own navy, air force, ground forces, and special forces units that parallel the conventional military. Its special operations Qods Force numbers roughly 3,000 troops and has been especially active in the training and support of Iraqi Shia militias.<sup>43</sup> IRGC and Qods Force ties to Iraqi Shia militias exist on many levels—militarily, ideologically, strategically, and politically. For example, in September of 2001, the commander in chief of the IRGC was replaced with a close ally of the Badr Brigade, Muhammad Ali Jafari. The reason given for the unexpected job change was simply that it was due to “US threats,” and Jafari shortly followed the announcement with the claim that “an attack by the regime's enemies is possible and the IRGC is ready to meet it with asymmetric warfare.”<sup>44</sup>

### **Indirect Support: Recipients**

In addition to direct support of the militias, there is a parallel path of support to other social, civil, and political organizations inside Iraq. Combined, these two branches of support target Iran's main objectives inside Iraq; namely, to tie down US and coalition forces and coerce them to leave the country and to deepen Iranian political, economic, and ideological influence.<sup>45</sup> As such, Iran uses direct support to accomplish the first objective and indirect support to accomplish the second. The recipients of indirect support are varied, but some of the more significant organizations are political parties and civil institutions in Iraqi Shiite cities. On the political front, Iran supports the two largest Shia parties in Iraq, SICI and the Dawa party.<sup>46</sup> On the civil, social, and ideological front, the recipients of Iranian support are more varied but remain tightly clustered around the main Shiite cities in Iraq of Najaf, Karbala, and Basra. Some of these ties are the natural result of a shared Shia faith and the ingrained, traditional practices of Iranian pilgrimages to some of Iraq's holiest Shia cities. Hersch notes that “last year, over one million Iranians travelled to Iraq on

pilgrimages, and there is more than a billion dollars a year in trading between the two countries. But the Americans act as if every Iranian inside Iraq were there to import weapons.”<sup>47</sup> The Iraqi city of Najaf stands as an example of Iranian support to a Shia stronghold. The city is the home of the sacred Imam Ali Shrine and is run by Abdul Aziz Hakim, leader of the SICI party.<sup>48</sup> Still, it is clear that Iran’s natural geographic proximity and ideological ties to Iraq create the situation in which some level of indirect support is inevitable.

### **Indirect Support: Methods and Vehicles**

While direct support was conducted mostly through military and intelligence vehicles, indirect support methods are more varied and comprise the extension of Iranian *soft* power in Iraq. In this manner, one of the main vehicles of support lies in the statements, visits, and behind-the-scenes influence of Iranian clerics as they communicate with Iraqi Shia clerics. Another such vehicle is the funding of civil projects in key Iraqi Shia cities and increased economic trade in Shiite-dominated zones. An example of increased economic trade with Shia zones in Iraq can be found in Basra, where Iran has established a free trade zone. According to Katzman, “Iraq is now Iran’s second largest non-oil export market, buying about \$1 billion worth of goods from Iran during January–September 2006 (\$1.3 billion on an annualized basis).”<sup>49</sup> Finally, the large network of Iranian-sponsored work projects, reconstruction projects, and technical experts across Iraq comprise the last broad category of support vehicles. Commenting on this last category, Carpenter and Innocent offer this assessment:

While Bush remains committed to Iraq, American military might may not be enough to compete with Tehran’s “hearts and minds” campaign. Iran provides hospital treatment and surgery for wounded Iraqis, supplies Iraq with 2 million liters of kerosene a day, and provides 20% of Iraq’s cooking gas. Kenneth Katzman, a Middle East specialist for the Congressional Research Service, calls Iran’s wide-ranging leverage within Iraq “strategic depth,” making the Iraqi government and populace acquiescent to Iranian interests.<sup>50</sup>

It is this “hearts and minds” campaign that embodies the core of Iranian indirect support.

In summary, Iran does indeed provide support to Iraqi organizations and has deep ties to many of the military, social, civil, and political groups operating there today. It becomes clear that levels of Iran’s direct and indirect support will vary based on two factors: (1) the extent to which they

can exploit opportunities to advance their regional power and balance that of the United States, and (2) the extent to which Iran perceives its security is threatened by the United States or other regional actors. Thus Iran primarily uses indirect support to pursue its goal of regional power growth and direct support as a reaction to its perceived security threat by the United States and its neighbors. Furthermore, there is likely to be some degree of continuous Iranian indirect support. While levels of this type of support will vary to some extent, the magnitude of its variation will be significantly smaller than that of the direct support. This should be considered a baseline level of support, and since it is comprised primarily of Iranian *soft* power, does not constitute an immediate security threat. Against this baseline, however, is Iran's direct support, which is subject to greater degrees of variance based on Iranian perceptions of its security threat and the tightness of the security dilemma. Levels of direct support are likely to be highest when there is little communication between the United States and Iran, when aggressive rhetoric is passed from one side to the other, when the presence of patently offensive weapons systems in the region are highest (thus representing an increased threat to the Iranians' own security), and when the internal security situation in Iraq is weak. However, direct support levels will likely decline if the security dilemma is loosened, the United States and Iran engage in increased communication, offensive weapons proliferation is limited, and Iraq's internal security is strong. This is a significant finding, since Iranian direct support is comprised of military arms and other support that is violent in nature and constitutes a much larger tactical and strategic security threat to the United States. This implies that US security policy should aim to reduce the security dilemma by leading Iranian engagement with communication, scaling back its military containment by decreasing the flow of patently offensive weapons systems to Iranian neighbors, and pushing hard for internal Iraqi security requirements. At the same time, however, the policy should be mindful of the baseline level of indirect support and prepare to accept and manage some level of Iranian interaction in Iraq.

### **Security Policy Recommendations**

In analyzing US strategy and policy actions to date, three critical insights emerge: coercive instruments such as sanctions may be successful, as such actions have had limited success in the past; applying one-size-fits-all

coercive pressure without understanding the root causes of support reduces chances for success; and coercive bargaining used by itself is a costly and risky strategy. Regarding the potential for coercion to yield successful results, recent examples can be found in decreasing levels of Iranian support to Hezbollah. Commenting on this decreasing support, Byman notes that “over time, however, the cumulative effects of sanctions and isolation—and, more importantly, the risk that additional attacks would lead to increased pressure—led Iran to reduce its direct involvement in terrorism.”<sup>51</sup> At the same time, however, the coercing state’s actions are only one part of the overall process causing a state to reduce its support—other reasons are internal to the target state itself, according to Byman.<sup>52</sup> With this in mind, one can see that while coercion may affect direct support, which is heavily influenced by security and vulnerability concerns, coercive tactics will likely be ineffective at reducing indirect support. The reasons for this type of support are *internal* to Iran, and coercive tactics to reduce this could in fact have negative effects if applied improperly.

The current policy approach applies a seemingly limited understanding of the overall dynamic situation and the specific reasons that cause Iran to support Iraqi Shia in the first place. To ignore these factors is to significantly decrease the chances for successful coercion. Byman emphasizes that the type of coercion must be tailored to the specific dynamics in the target state and that “undifferentiated pressure almost always fails. The motivations of the supporting state, the type of support provided, and the dynamic of the group it supports, all will affect whether coercion succeeds or fails.”<sup>53</sup> Adding to this is the temptation for the administration to view *all* types of Iranian influence in Iraq as a security threat. As has already been shown, there are many Iranian activities inside Iraq that are nonlethal and even nonviolent that must be accounted for in the overall scenario.

So what are the implications of continuing the current strategy? As noted above, one of the more likely outcomes is that over time, US efforts to maintain the status quo balance of power in the region will result in further erosion of American political, economic, and military capacities and will not prevent a rise in Iranian power and influence. If security gains in Iraq are not capitalized on, it is likely that the state will once again see an increase in sectarian warfare and a corresponding increase in Iranian direct support to the Shia militias. Furthermore, by seeking a strategy of containment and aggressive rhetoric, the United States will likely cause Iran to feel more vulnerable and insecure. As a result, Iran will

likely increase its levels of direct and possibly even indirect support as a counter move. The cumulative result of these actions will be a tightening of the security dilemma and increased chances for a hostile confrontation between the United States and Iran. *Paradoxically, the current strategy will most likely result in degraded US power in the region and a greater security threat from Iran.* It is clear that the time for a new strategy is now.

### **A New Security Strategy: Engagement and Enlightened Coercive Bargaining**

As previously stated, this new strategy has three main goals: (1) reduce overall levels of Iranian support inside Iraq, (2) reduce support of Iraqi Shia militias specifically, and (3) use coercive bargaining to push the remaining levels of support from direct to indirect methods. The desired end state of this strategy is a reduction in the tightness of the security dilemma between the United States and Iran; lower levels of Iranian support to Iraq, especially direct support; and a stable balance of power in the region. This strategy is less costly for the United States to pursue, increases overall US security in the region, and offers the potential long-term benefit of a more stable Iraq.

The first two goals are interrelated and address policies that should be taken to reduce levels of support. While it is important to reduce the aggregate level of support, targeted reduction of direct support is vital to increasing US security, and this is a central focus of the policy. Direct support levels are most likely highest when the security dilemma is tightest (reference fig. 2). Furthermore, results above show that the primary rationale for Iranian direct support is the perceived threat from the United States, its regional neighbors, and Iraqi Sunnis. Therefore, the first part of the policy seeks to loosen or dissolve the security dilemma, thus reducing Iranian threat perceptions from the United States and other regional states. In order to loosen the security dilemma, Jervis argues that offensive actions must be distinguishable from defensive actions. To accomplish this, a number of things must occur—most importantly, the United States must engage in clear communication with Iran and cease its efforts toward diplomatic isolation. It must communicate directly and clearly to Iran what it considers offensive actions by the regime. Once the appropriate intelligence is obtained, the United States should confront Iran with the accumulated evidence and further communicate that the United States sees such actions as offensively hostile. In a similar assessment, Patrick Clawson

argues that “it would be prudent for the Administration to produce more evidence of direct military training—or produce fighters captured in Iraq who had been trained in Iran.”<sup>54</sup> These actions should give Iran pause as to the costs of direct support and possibly trigger a reduction. Furthermore, the United States should severely limit the offensive weapons and funding it is providing to Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar and instead emphasize the procurement of defensive weapons (Patriot missiles, early warning radars, etc.). It should further discourage the forward deployment of such weapons by all states in the region, as this will only heighten Iranian perceptions of an impending attack.

If Iran and the United States can successfully loosen this aspect of the security dilemma, it is likely that levels of Iranian direct support will decrease. However, if the security situation remains haphazard and Iraqi Shia groups are vulnerable to rival Sunni groups, it is likely that direct support may not decrease as much as predicted. In this case, it is likely that Iran will *increase* support to Iraqi Shia militias to protect vulnerable Shia groups when the state cannot. To remedy this, the United States must push for greater advances in Iraqi security institutions such as the national police and the newly formed military, even if this means accepting greater Shia, and potentially Iranian, influence in Iraq.

Finally, to further reduce overall levels of Iranian support to Iraqi Shia militias and to foster a more stable security environment, the United States should recognize that some degree of Iranian rise to power is inevitable and should attempt to manage this rise through purposeful engagement. Emphasizing this point, Carpenter and Innocent argue that “like it or not, Iran is now a major player in the region. Accepting this rather than reflexively seeking to confront and isolate Tehran would be the most effective policy. A countervailing coalition, with all its disadvantages, would be an inferior substitute for diplomatic and economic engagement.”<sup>55</sup> Nasr and Takeyh also recommend that “instead of focusing on restoring a former balance of power, the United States would be wise to aim for regional integration and foster a new framework in which all the relevant powers would have a stake in a stable status quo.”<sup>56</sup> If the United States engages Iran in a more cooperative manner and accepts its gradual rise in power, the regime would likely see a decreased need for high levels of support to Iraqi Shia militias and may also decrease indirect support levels. Combining the two approaches—loosening the security dilemma and applying heightened diplomatic engagement—Iran is likely to determine that the



cost of providing direct support (which is clearly seen as a hostile action by the United States) greatly outweighs its benefits and that it should seek opportunities for growth and security through more cost-beneficial (and less risky) avenues. Cooperative engagement must be at the forefront of any new policy change.

The third and final goal of the strategy is to use coercive bargaining to push remaining levels of support from direct to indirect methods. In many respects, the United States is already conducting some level of coercive bargaining with Iran; however, the proposed new strategy recognizes that support cannot reasonably be expected to cease altogether and instead seeks to use coercive bargaining to persuade Iran to move any remaining support to less threatening indirect activities.

This coercive bargaining strategy contains two elements that work in tandem to increase perceived costs and minimize perceived benefits of Iranian support. The first element of the strategy uses traditional coercive instruments and mechanisms to threaten Iran with limited military strikes on IRGC and Qods Force targets *if* evidence of ongoing high levels of direct support is found. The second element uses nontraditional methods of coercion to persuade Iran from continuing direct support and instead switch any remaining support to indirect methods.


The first element, coercion through the *threat* or limited use of actual force, lends itself to traditional coercive theory. The key difference between a threat used in coercive bargaining and simple hostile rhetoric is that a coercive threat is based on solid communication between the actors, relays a concrete action that will be taken as the result of a specified action, and is seen as credible. Much of this concept is grounded in Daniel Byman and Matthew Waxman's concept of coercive bargaining strategy. In this case, the preferred instruments of the coercion are US air strikes and, to a lesser degree, US special operations raids along the Iranian border. The chosen mechanism is "denial," and the desired outcome is a decrease in the level of Iranian direct support to Iraqi Shia militias. Air strikes and special operations raids are the chosen instruments, since these actions offer the greatest potential for success, are relatively "surgical" in nature, and are areas where the United States has relative "escalation dominance" (this occurs when a coercer can increase costs on the target but deny the target's attempts to increase costs in return.)<sup>57</sup> As part of a denial strategy, IRGC and Qods Force facilities and infrastructure sites would be targeted for destruction. In this manner, Iran would see that the potentially high costs of providing this le-

thal support, namely the credible threat or physical destruction of key IRGC and Qods Force facilities, outweigh the potential benefits of support to Iraqi Shia militias and abandon this avenue of support in favor of less costly activities. While not without risks, theory indicates that denial mechanisms are more successful than punishment mechanisms and that “aerial bombing is most likely to work when demands are limited, military vulnerability can be effectively exploited, the attacker enjoys a unilateral nuclear advantage, and aerial attacks are coupled with military action by other forces.”<sup>58</sup>

The second element of the coercive bargaining strategy does not rely on military threats of force but uses the same cost-benefit model to persuade Iran to seek alternative methods of support through indirect activities. If Iran is threatened or sustains military strikes as the result of direct support, it is likely to seek other low-cost methods of providing support. Since it is assumed that there will always be a baseline level of support, it is likely that Iran will look for alternative methods and support vehicles. When it does, the US policy should encourage indirect support over direct support, as this will funnel any remaining support to less threatening activities. Specifically, if funding can be pushed to the Iraqi Shia political parties and social institutions instead of the militias, prospects for long-term direct support may further decline. For example, Byman notes that “Iran’s support for Hezbollah changed for several reasons: a decline in Iran’s revolutionary ardor; Hezbollah’s increased awareness of, and responsiveness to, Lebanon’s political and geostrategic realities; and growing costs from outside pressure.”<sup>59</sup> As Byman alludes, this element is best accomplished in tandem with coercive threats of military force. Through engagement, the United States can communicate the benefits to be attained through indirect support instead of direct support. Finally, Paul Lauren offers a closing piece of advice regarding coercion strategies, arguing for the importance of communication throughout the process. He writes, “To achieve its objectives, this strategy must effectively communicate the coercing power’s demands for a resolution of the conflict and those threats of unacceptable costs. Communication is thus of essential importance.”<sup>60</sup> Thus, the new strategy emphasizes engagement first, then coercive bargaining.

## **Conclusion**

With more than 150,000 American men and women stationed in Iraq and thousands more in the region, the United States has a very real and immediate interest in increasing its security and promoting stability in the region. The

2008 presidential election offers the country a chance to change course from previous policy actions if they are in error. It is in this context that this article seeks to answer the proposed research question in earnest. There are no easy choices, and the road ahead is perilous and uncertain. However, in this high-stakes security environment, America cannot afford to get this wrong and must pursue a thoughtful, purposeful policy guided by theory, history, and pragmatic common sense. 

## Notes

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30. Hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Annual Threat Assessment, 27 February 2007, [http://www.odni.gov/testimonies/20070227\\_transcript.pdf](http://www.odni.gov/testimonies/20070227_transcript.pdf).
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# Using the Patriot Act to Turn North Korea's Dirty Money into a Bargaining Chip

*Richard S. Tracey*

IN THE tumultuous aftermath of al-Qaeda's 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States, the Congress passed, by overwhelming margins, the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001 (USA PATRIOT Act). This wide-ranging legislation contained provisions designed to enhance the US government's statutory authorities in five areas: domestic security, surveillance, money laundering, border security, and intelligence. Although the controversial surveillance and intelligence provisions generated the most intense debate and media coverage, the money laundering provisions in Title III of the Patriot Act are no less important and represent the culmination of over a decade of experience, analysis, and ideas.

A key component of Title III is section 311, "Special Measures for Jurisdictions, Financial Institutions or International Transactions of Primary Money Laundering Concern." These provisions provided the Treasury Department flexible and powerful new authorities to protect the US financial system and authorized it, after consultations with other government agencies, to designate a jurisdiction or financial institution outside of the United States as "of primary money laundering concern." Treasury can also require US financial institutions to implement one or more "special measures" to protect themselves and the US financial system. The "special measures" include enhanced transaction recordkeeping, detailed customer identification procedures, information on payable and correspondent accounts, and prohibiting business relationships with designated financial jurisdictions or institutions.<sup>1</sup>

The Treasury Department, through the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), quickly made full use of this new authority and, between 2002 and 2005, initiated section 311 actions against eight financial

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institutions and three jurisdictions.<sup>2</sup> Treasury's section 311 action against a bank located in China's Macau Special Administrative Region, Banco Delta Asia (BDA), is the best known and perhaps the most misunderstood. In September 2005, the FinCEN announced that BDA had a long-standing "special relationship" with North Korea that "specifically facilitated the criminal activity of North Korean government agencies and front companies."<sup>3</sup> To be sure, North Korea often behaves more like a criminal gang than a responsible state, and according to a recent Congressional Research Service report, "the aggregate scale" of their criminal "activity is significant."<sup>4</sup> For 20 years, BDA facilitated this illicit behavior—which included distributing counterfeit US currency, smuggling black market tobacco products, and drug trafficking—by handling North Korean financial transactions with little oversight, control, or due diligence.

The designation sparked a financial chain reaction. Spooked customers withdrew \$133 million, almost one-third of the bank's deposits. The Monetary Authority of Macau, fearing that the section 311 designation would jeopardize its access to international financial markets and systems, promptly replaced the management of the bank and froze \$25 million of tainted North Korean assets. More importantly, this action highlighted the risk of handling North Korean money, causing global financial institutions to spurn North Korean financial transactions. This situation created an informal financial embargo of North Korea.<sup>5</sup> The FinCEN's section 311 designation of BDA cut off an already largely isolated North Korea further from the international financial system, and thus, as some argue, provided a strong incentive for North Korea to return to the six-party multilateral talks with China, South Korea, Japan, Russia, and the United States.<sup>6</sup> Undeniably, there appears to be a causal link between the designation of BDA as a "financial institution of primary money laundering concern" and North Korea's agreement in February 2007 to freeze, disable, and declare all its nuclear weapons programs. Indeed, North Korea shut down its nuclear reactor at Yongbyon, readmitted International Atomic Energy Administration (IAEA) inspectors, and initially complied with the terms of the agreement. Thus, casual observers could easily conclude that the BDA saga offers a new policy model for dealing with recalcitrant proliferators with targeted financial sanctions.

We need to be cautious, however, about drawing hasty conclusions. While it is true that the BDA saga highlights the emerging power of coercive financial instruments to shape the behavior of miscreant states, I argue in this article that it does not offer a new policy model and put forward

three interrelated reasons to support this proposition. First, using section 311 simultaneously as a protective anti-money-laundering/counter terrorist financing (AML/CTF) tool and an active instrument of coercive diplomacy to “persuade an opponent to stop and/or undo any action he is already embarked upon”<sup>7</sup> presents significant practical challenges. Congress crafted the provision primarily to protect the US financial system and increase the pressure on foreign jurisdictions to bring their AML/CTF laws into line with evolving international financial standards. Next, North Korea is a uniquely vulnerable target because of the nature of its regime, its profound isolation, and its economic destitution. Finally, section 311’s role in coercing North Korea to modify its behavior may be more a case of strategic serendipity than the purposeful use of a new AML/CTF tool to achieve nonproliferation objectives. In short, it appears that US policy makers may have taken advantage of the unintended consequences of the initial BDA designation to achieve their nonproliferation goals vis-à-vis North Korea. To develop this argument I will examine the origins, purpose, and application of section 311, with an eye cocked toward understanding what policy lessons we can draw from the BDA section 311 designation.

## **The Origins of Section 311**

We can trace the Patriot Act’s section 311 provisions to two clusters of experiences, analyses, and ideas: (1) the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics, and International Operations (now the Subcommittee on International Operations) investigation into the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) scandal in the early 1990s and (2) the Clinton administration’s elevation of international money laundering to a national security issue. Together they contributed to an emerging recognition that international flows of illicit money not only fueled crime, terrorism, and weapons proliferation but also threatened the integrity of the financial system.

The Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics, and International Operations—spurred by Senator John Kerry’s (D-MA) leadership, first as chair and then as ranking member—provided the first sustained analysis and coherent policy recommendations regarding the symbiotic relations between global crime, terrorism, corruption, and the flows of illicit money through legitimate financial institutions. At the center of this work was the committee’s investigation of BCCI, an investigation that led them to uncover what

Senator Kerry later described as a “clandestine world of money launderers, drug traffickers, arms merchants, terrorists and covert nuclear programs.”<sup>8</sup> This notorious scandal merited a 1991 cover story in *Time* magazine, “The Dirtiest Bank of All.”<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the subcommittee found that BCCI’s Pakistani founder, Agha Hasan Abedi, had created a putrid petri dish of “multiplying layers of entities related to one another through an impenetrable series of holding companies, affiliates, subsidiaries, banks-within-banks, insider dealings and nominee relationships.”<sup>10</sup> This elaborate structure, which spanned 73 countries, represented a political-criminal nexus that linked the underworld of criminals to the upper world of politicians.<sup>11</sup> The illicit money that flowed through BCCI’s structure corrupted not only the international financial system but also local and national political systems.

The subcommittee’s conclusions and recommendations foreshadowed the Patriot Act’s Title III provisions. At the core of the committee’s report was an understanding that the BCCI scandal was not an isolated example of a rogue bank but a case study in the expanding vulnerabilities of governments and financial institutions to the corruption of illicit global money flows. From this conclusion, the report recommended developing “a more aggressive and coordinated approach to international financial crime,” improving intelligence and information sharing and cooperation across the government, imposing new requirements on foreign auditors, establishing the identities of foreign investors in US businesses, and requiring that foreign governments improve their financial regulations. In sum, this investigation contributed to the recognition that the prevention and detection of money laundering was a national security issue, requiring not only stronger US domestic laws but also intensified international cooperation to reduce the number of financial institutions willing to handle dirty money.

Despite the committee’s fine investigative work and the notoriety of the BCCI scandal, it took the Clinton administration to elevate money laundering to a national and international security concern. In October 1995, the United Nations’ 50th anniversary, President Clinton challenged the General Assembly to cooperate against emerging transnational threats and “the increasingly interconnected groups that traffic in terror, organized crime, drug smuggling, and the spread of weapons of mass destruction.”<sup>12</sup> Establishing US leadership on this issue, President Clinton announced the following:

Yesterday, I directed our government to identify and put on notice nations that tolerate money laundering. Criminal enterprises are moving vast sums of ill-gotten



gains through the international financial system with absolute impunity. We must not allow them to wash the blood off profits from the sale of drugs from terror or organized crimes. Nations should bring their banks and financial systems into conformity with the international antimoney-laundering standards. We will work to help them to do so. And if they refuse, we will consider appropriate sanctions.<sup>13</sup>

President Clinton's direction to the government, Presidential Decision Directive 42 (PDD-42), formally acknowledged, for the first time, that international crime and money laundering were national security threats. PDD-42 directed specific actions under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to block the assets associated with the Columbian drug trade in the United States, directed various government agencies to integrate their efforts against international crime syndicates and money laundering, and established interagency working groups to address aspects of international crime. Underlining the Clinton administration's emerging approach were three operating assumptions. First, it recognized the need to stem the proliferation of unregulated jurisdictions as well as attacking existing jurisdictions facilitating money laundering. Next, the administration posed that traditional domestic regulatory and law enforcement mechanisms could not cope with the transnational nature of international crime, terrorism, and money laundering. Finally, it concluded that international and multinational cooperation was essential.<sup>14</sup>

Consistent with the goals of the strategy and the Clinton administration's underlying operating assumptions, the Treasury Department pursued a "name and (shame)" strategy to establish an international financial standard through three consensual multilateral organizations: the G-7's Financial Stability Forum (FSF), the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).<sup>15</sup> The most important of these evolving efforts was the FATF. The G-7 established the FATF in 1989 and chartered the 16 original member states to adopt, implement, and evaluate international anti-money-laundering standards. The FATF's initial 40 Recommendations, updated in 1996, provided a comprehensive framework for gauging the effectiveness of a state's AML/CTF prevention and enforcement measures in areas such as customer due diligence and recordkeeping, reporting suspicious transactions, regulation and supervision, transparency, dealing with noncompliant countries, and international cooperation.<sup>16</sup> Without a doubt, the 40 Recommendations reflected a "top-down" approach, in that the 16 FATF member states committed to curtailing the flow of dirty money, set clear prevention and enforcement standards, and then put pressure on nonconforming states to

rein in rogue banks and other financial institutions that were facilitating money laundering, either through omission or commission.<sup>17</sup> Unquestionably, the FATF has effectively put a bright spotlight on states and financial entities with slipshod AML/CTF regimes, and this contributed to the environment that made the section 311 action against BDA effective. A detailed 2004 study published by the well-regarded Institute for International Economics concluded that the evolving international AML regime “over the past 15 years has changed how banks and other financial institutions do business.”<sup>18</sup> States that fail to meet FATF standards jeopardize access to lucrative financial markets and systems, and this provides a powerful incentive to avoid and curb illicit financial behavior. While this approach has been valuable in setting and establishing international AML/CTF standards, it is important to underscore that the FATF has no formal enforcement mechanisms and the foundation of its effectiveness is derived from the consensus of the expanding number of FATF member states and its ability to name and shame.<sup>19</sup>

Yet despite this success in setting enhanced international anti-money-laundering prevention and enforcement standards, the March 2000 *National Money Laundering Strategy* (NMLS) recognized that the authority of the secretary of the treasury to protect the US financial system from dirty money was not “as robust as it could be.” The NMLS correctly identified a gap between the nonbinding informational advisories about specific jurisdictions or financial institutions and the powerful authorities available to the secretary under the IEEPA to impose full-scale sanctions. Thus, the NMLS identified the passage of legislation designed to fill this gap with “targeted, narrowly tailored, and proportional” actions against money laundering threats as a goal.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, the Treasury Department worked closely with the Congress to develop legislation to bridge this gap.

Although the Clinton administration was successful in garnering international cooperation to combat money laundering and financial crimes, it was less successful in achieving its anti-money-laundering goals in Congress. In the summer of 2000, H.R. 3886, the International Counter-Money Laundering and Foreign Anti-Corruption Act of 2000 was voted out of Rep. Jim Leach’s (R-IA) House Banking Committee by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 31–1, but it never made it to the House floor for a vote.<sup>21</sup> On the Senate side, Senator Kerry concurrently introduced similar legislation, S. 2972. This bill never made it past the fierce opposition of Senator Phil Gramm (R-TX), chair of the Senate Banking

Committee.<sup>22</sup> Although these legislative proposals failed, they contained the provisions that later became section 311 of the Patriot Act and consequently represent significant milestones.

### **The Purpose of Section 311**

William F. Wechsler, the special adviser to the secretary of the treasury, testified in June 2000 before the House Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources, and strongly endorsed H.R. 3886. He highlighted the importance of the bill's central provision that would authorize the secretary of the treasury to "designate a foreign jurisdiction, a foreign institution or a class of international transactions as being a primary money laundering concern."<sup>23</sup> This designation would provide the secretary the authority, in consultation with the chair of the Federal Reserve and other appropriate officials, to impose one or more targeted actions, including provisions for additional recordkeeping and reporting, identification of beneficial owners and those using correspondent or payable-through accounts, and restricting correspondent relationships with money-laundering havens and rogue foreign banks.

When Senator Kerry introduced S. 2972 on the Senate floor, he recalled that the BCCI investigation demonstrated that "rogue financial institutions have the ability to circumvent the laws designed to stop financial crimes." Moreover, echoing the words of the 2000 *NMLS*, he noted that S. 2972, by giving the secretary of the treasury the authority to designate financial entities as "of primary money laundering concern" and providing a range of targeted authorities, bridged the gap between nonbinding financial advisories and draconian IEEPA sanctions. The overarching purpose of this provision was, according to Kerry, to "prevent laundered money from slipping undetected into the US financial system and, as a result, increase the pressure on foreign money laundering havens to bring their own laws into line with international money laundering standards."<sup>24</sup>

With a new administration and a new Congress in January 2001, these proposals died. Highly skeptical about the Clinton administration's approach to money laundering and financial crimes, Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill sent mixed messages about the new administration's attitude toward the Clinton Treasury Department's multilateral approach and legislative strategy.<sup>25</sup> Not surprisingly, the Bush administration's 2001 *NMLS*

made no mention of the legislative initiatives that the Clinton administration had pursued so assiduously. However, the Bush administration's evolving uncertainty toward the Clinton administration's AML/CTF legacy ended abruptly on 9/11. From that point forward, it fully embraced the Clinton administration's AMF/CTF policies and worked with the 33 FATF member states to update the 1996 40 Recommendations to cover terrorist financing through Eight Special Recommendations.<sup>26</sup> This sudden change in attitude created the conditions that allowed the language of H.R. 3886 and S. 2972 to resurface in the Patriot Act's Title III, section 311 provisions.

Senator Kerry, speaking on the Senate floor during the final debate on the Patriot Act, remarked that the money laundering provisions in Title III were the "culmination" of over 10 years of work.<sup>27</sup> He was right. The Senate debates on 11 and 25 October 2001 on the Title III provisions recapitulated earlier arguments for enhanced AML/CTF provisions that grew out of the BCCI scandal investigation and the Clinton administration's efforts. At no point in these debates, or in earlier debates or discussions regarding the provisions that became section 311, did anyone suggest that section 311's purpose was to be a nonproliferation bargaining chip or an instrument of coercive diplomacy.

### **The Application of Section 311**

As noted at the outset of this article, the Treasury Department, through the FinCEN, made full use of this new authority and has initiated 11 separate section 311 designations. Some designations targeted the financial systems of entire countries, such as Ukraine and Burma, because their protection and enforcement frameworks were inadequate and vulnerable to exploitation by criminals and terrorists. In other cases, the section 311 designations focused on specific financial entities, such as the Latvian financial institutions, Multibanka and VEF Banka, and the Commercial Bank of Syria. All these actions were consistent with the original intent of section 311, as well as the evolving FATF AML/CTF standards. In fact, each of the 11 designations references the FATF standards as the normative benchmark.

These actions demonstrate both the protective nature as well as the rehabilitative potential of section 311. In the case of Ukraine, the government took prompt remedial actions to update its money laundering laws

to empower financial intelligence units, lowered the suspicious transactions reporting thresholds, criminalized money laundering, and improved customer due diligence. Thus, the original 2002 designation of Ukraine as a primary money laundering concern was rescinded in April 2003. However, the Burmese government failed to respond adequately, and in April 2004 the Treasury Department issued a final designation that imposed the harshest of the special measures available and essentially cut Burma off from US financial institutions. In the case of Multibanka, prompt and effective remedial actions by the Latvian government as well as Multibanka corrected the protection and enforcement deficiencies. Consequently, Treasury ultimately withdrew the finding against Multibanka in July 2006. However, in the cases of VFB Banka and the Commercial Bank of Syria, Treasury issued final rules, in July and March 2006 respectively, that cut them off from US financial institutions.<sup>28</sup>

We can now return to the section 311 designation of BDA as “of primary money laundering concern.” As a start point, it is important to note and understand that the Bush administration was simultaneously pursuing two parallel lines of effort vis-à-vis North Korea. The first focused on North Korea’s clandestine nuclear weapons programs and the second on its pervasive illicit crime-for-profit activities.

The first line of effort is well known. Following the fall 2002 revelation that North Korea had a clandestine uranium enrichment program and the subsequent collapse of the much-maligned 1994 Agreed Framework, the Bush administration initiated, in August 2003, regional multilateral talks to negotiate an end to North Korea’s nuclear weapons programs. These six-party talks produced the February 2007 agreement that committed North Korea to freeze, disable, and declare all its nuclear programs.

The second effort, less well known but equally important to this story, predates the six-party talks and led to the section 311 designation of BDA as “of primary money laundering concern.” In early 2002, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James A. Kelly and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage tasked David Asher, Kelly’s senior adviser, to study, investigate, and develop policies to counter North Korea’s illicit activities. This tasking led to the establishment of an extensive interagency effort—the Illicit Activities Initiative (IAI)—that spanned 14 government departments and agencies, involved approximately 200 officials and analysts, and included cooperation with private industry, foreign governments, and international organizations.<sup>29</sup>

These two parallel lines of effort intersected, or as National Defense University professor Michael J. Mazarr recently put it, “crashed into each other,” when the Treasury Department designated BDA as “of primary money laundering concern” on 15 September 2005 in the midst of the promising fourth round of six-party talks in Beijing.<sup>30</sup> After rather unproductive rounds in August 2003, February 2004, and June 2004, this round produced a statement of principles and thus seemed to offer a tangible expectation of future progress. In spite of this, the next round of talks in November 2005 stalled and sputtered, as the biggest issue was now North Korea’s consternation over the designation of BDA and the freezing of its funds by Macau. A recent and very detailed study of the ongoing Korean nuclear crisis by Yoichi Funabashi depicted the lead North Korean negotiator, Kim Gye-gwan dramatically comparing financial flows to the circulation of blood in the body, that if clogged would stop the heart. Funabashi then quoted a Japanese delegation member’s observation of Kim’s behavior: “It sounded like a cry squeezed out from deep inside his body. I thought that was the first occasion that North Korea allowed itself to expose its true weakness.”<sup>31</sup>

Unquestionably, the North Korean economy is weak. Although North Korea recovered from the famine it endured in the mid-1990s, it remains a state unable to provide basic necessities for the majority of its citizens. The population’s pain is not distributed equally, as this supposedly classless society features a rigid class system that favors a privileged few. Indeed, in this bleak land of pervasive poverty, the privileged leaders of the bureaucracy and the military have access to foreign cars, imported food, medicines, and other luxuries. These privileged elites—the heart of the North Korean regime—are sustained in part by the illicit financial flows generated by North Korea’s shadowy criminal activities.<sup>32</sup>

The six parties would not meet again until December 2006, and in the intervening year North Korea launched a Taepodong-2 missile (July) and tested a nuclear weapon (October). Although it is not fair to conclude that the BDA designation led directly to the breakdown in the talks, it is fair to say that the BDA action became a prominent variable in North Korean–US relations.

North Korea came back to the table in December 2006 and in February 2007 agreed to a two-phase plan based upon the September 2005 statement of principles to freeze, disable, and declare all its nuclear weapons programs.<sup>33</sup> The public record is not clear on the diplomatic twists and

turns that ultimately brought North Korea back to the table, although Chinese pressure in the aftermath of its nuclear test, new UN sanctions, and a strong desire to regain access to its frozen assets appear to have been significant factors.

The 13 February 2007 agreement among North Korea, the United States, China, Japan, South Korea, and Russia did not mention the BDA funds or any related financial issues. Nevertheless, the United States and the North Korean representatives had side discussions on the frozen \$25 million, and it is clear that the return of these funds to North Korea was an implicit part of this agreement. Although the Treasury Department issued its final section 311 rule on BDA on 19 March 2007 “to help ensure that Banco Delta Asia is denied access to the US financial system, as well as to increase awareness within the international financial community of the risks and deficiencies of Banco Delta Asia,” it was simultaneously working to facilitate the relocation of the \$25 million.<sup>34</sup>

The awkward task of transferring the \$25 million to North Korea and others caught in this tangled financial web turned out to be a more difficult operation than originally anticipated. The \$25 million was distributed among 52 accounts, including 17 with clear ties to North Korea, and no reputable financial institution wanted to handle money tainted by North Korea’s illicit activities.<sup>35</sup> It took four months for the State and Treasury Departments to arrange the transfer with the complex involvement of the central banks of Macau and Russia, the Far Eastern Commercial Bank, a private bank in Vladivostok, and the Federal Reserve Bank in New York. As this intricate financial and diplomatic transaction unfolded, the North Koreans held up executing the initial phase of the February 2007 agreement, which required them to freeze (“shut down and seal”) their nuclear facilities at Yongbyon and invite the IAEA back to monitor the freeze. In late June, when the funds finally were transferred, North Korea promptly began to comply with the terms of the February agreement, clearly demonstrating that these funds had indeed become a powerful bargaining chip and a tool of coercive diplomacy.

### **Assessment: A New Policy Model?**

James R. Wilkinson, chief of staff to Treasury secretary Henry M. Paulson, provided the following early assessment of the BDA saga: “The international community now clearly understands just how potent our

financial actions can be. . . . Our sanctions programs are designed to combat illicit behavior and help achieve political movement.”<sup>36</sup> Although his observation is not without merit, the policy lessons are more complex. Wilkinson correctly notes that financial instruments are powerful tools, and indeed the international community was watching. Yet, when he talks about “sanctions programs designed to combat illicit behavior and help achieve political movement,” he is simultaneously using the language of AML/CTF and a traditional sanctions regime. As a result, his assessment unintentionally draws our attention to the practical problems with using section 311 simultaneously as an AML/CTF tool and an instrument of coercive diplomacy.

The need for international cooperation to combat illicit financing, highlighted in the BCCI investigation, reinforced by the Clinton administration, and belatedly but wholeheartedly embraced by the Bush administration after the trauma of 9/11, is a central tenet of the international AML/CTF regime. Underlining this level of cooperation among responsible states and the international financial community is the understanding that these standards embodied principally in the FATF recommendations are not situational. Deputy Assistant Treasury Secretary for Terrorist Financing and Financial Crimes Daniel Glasser has correctly stated in congressional testimony that “FATF sets the global standard for combating terrorist financing and money laundering.”<sup>37</sup> But, as already noted, it is a standard maintained and enforced by consensus and the ability to name and shame. Thus, routinely turning international financial standards into situational instruments of diplomacy, no matter how worthy the objective, could well undermine these evolving standards of financial behavior critical to the protection of our financial system and ability to choke off financing for terrorism and other illicit activities. Widely accepted, tough AML/CTF international financial standards reduce the places that purveyors of nefarious activities (drug traders, terrorists, WMD proliferators) can safely hide and move their dirty money. While, in the end, the Treasury Department issued a final section 311 rule on BDA essentially denying it access to the US financial system, the fact that it was concurrently facilitating the relocation of \$25 million of largely illicit funds out of BDA back into North Korean and other hands undercuts the spirit of these norms.

Consequently, the apparent success of the BDA actions could establish—if misunderstood—an unfortunate precedent. The risk here is that current and future policy makers could reasonably but dangerously conclude that



section 311 is an effective tool of coercive diplomacy. As we have seen, Treasury's section 311 designation was successful because of the swift reaction of the international financial community. Paradoxically, the routine use of section 311 as a tool of coercive diplomacy to achieve situational political ends could well undercut the international financial standards that contributed to its effectiveness against North Korea in the first place. This is not simply a matter of the United States maintaining the moral high ground. The evolving international financial standards—embodied mainly in the FATF—have changed the way reputable banks and other financial institutions do business. Moreover, FATF standards are maintained by consensus and the ability to name and shame bad actors. Thus, the United States needs to be careful that its actions do not undermine the international consensus essential to an effective AML/CTF regime.

This in turn highlights another practical matter associated with using section 311 as a bargaining chip or tool of coercive diplomacy. Traditional trade, travel, or financial sanctions—either codified in statute or established in executive orders—allow policy makers to respond to changing strategic circumstances. Although adjustments to traditional sanctions are not always easy or timely, they can be turned off, modified, or calibrated, depending on the behavior of the target and our strategic objectives. However, the financial chain reaction that Treasury's section 311 designation of BDA sparked was beyond its ability to turn off, modify, or calibrate. As a result, it took a creative and intricate financial and diplomatic effort to cash in our bargaining chips (the \$25 million) in order to get North Korea to agree to freeze, disable, and declare its nuclear weapons programs and facilities. The other problem is, of course, if North Korea backslides on its February 2007 obligations, the United States has no way to take the money back.<sup>38</sup>

It is also important in any assessment of the BDA saga to consider how the isolated and economically destitute North Korean regime was uniquely vulnerable to targeted financial actions. Although the North Korean economy is in shambles with widespread malnutrition and pervasive poverty, its privileged elites live well and depend, in part, on the proceeds from the illicit trade that BDA facilitated to maintain itself. The regime's leader, Kim Jong-Il, is a totalitarian dictator who maintains a long-time horizon; rules without the consent of the people; has total control of the government and all aspects of fiscal, monetary, and taxation policies; and maintains control by maximizing the loyalty of key elites and repressing the gen-

eral population. In short, Kim Jong-Il's priority is preserving the regime and not the welfare of his people.<sup>39</sup> As Kim Gye-gwan's agitated response revealed, the section 311 action that cut off the regime from the international financial system, directly threatened the regime elites and thus gained unexpected leverage in a way that years of broad-based trade and financial economic sanctions never did. However, expecting section 311 designations or other targeted financial actions to generate the same dramatic response from more complex and less-isolated regimes such as Iran, with competing centers of political and economic power and multiple links to the international financial community, is unrealistic.

Finally, it is not clear that the administration originally intended to use the section 311 designation of BDA as a bargaining chip or tool of coercive diplomacy. The two parallel interagency efforts, the IAI and the six-party talks, appeared to intersect unexpectedly in 2005. There are three possible explanations for the awkward timing of the section 311 designation. First, it was a deliberate effort to undermine the six-party talks. Second, the Bush team did not fully synchronize these two parallel efforts, and the timing was accidental. Third, senior policy makers synchronized the parallel diplomatic and financial efforts but never anticipated the impact the BDA designation would have on the international financial community and the blowback into the six-party talks. Perhaps the answer is a combination of all of these explanations. We do not fully know. Whatever the explanation for the timing, policy makers skillfully improvised, made a virtue out of necessity, took advantage of the situation, and got North Korea back to the negotiating table and on the path to freezing, disabling, and declaring its nuclear weapons programs. Unfortunately, in the interim between the suspension of the talks in November 2005 and the February 2007 agreement, North Korea launched a Taepodong-2 missile and tested a nuclear weapon.

In sum, while the use of section 311 against BDA does indeed offer an example of "how potent our financial actions can be," it does not offer a model for future actions. Beyond the practical challenges of using section 311 as a traditional sanction, its continued use as a tool of coercive diplomacy to achieve situational political ends could well undercut the evolving international financial standards that contributed in part to its remarkable effectiveness against North Korea. Moreover, North Korea was a uniquely vulnerable target because of the nature of its totalitarian regime, its profound isolation, and its economic destitution. Finally, section 311's role

in coercing North Korea to modify its behavior is a case of strategic serendipity, as it appears that US policy makers exploited the unintended consequences of the initial BDA designation to achieve their nonproliferation goals vis-à-vis North Korea. In short, the unexpected success of the BDA designation in changing North Korea's behavior was the result of a unique confluence of financial and geopolitical circumstances that policy makers likely cannot duplicate. ■■■

## Notes

1. Public Law 107-56—Oct. 26, 2001, 115 Stat. 299, [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=107\\_cong\\_public\\_laws&docid=f:publ056.107.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=107_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ056.107.pdf).

2. See the FinCEN Web site, [http://www.fincen.gov/reg\\_section311.html](http://www.fincen.gov/reg_section311.html), for an updated list of ongoing section 311 actions. This Web site provides links to the *Federal Register* announcements of section 311 findings, notices of rule making, final rules, and rescinded designations. The FinCEN has issued final rules in six cases and has not issued any new findings since 2005.

3. Notices, *Federal Register* 70, no. 181 (Tuesday, 20 September 2005), 55216.

4. Raphael Perl and Dick K. Nanto, *North Korean Crime-for-Profit Activities* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service [CRS], 16 February 2007), 1.

5. Donald Greenless and David Lague, "Trail Led to Macao as the Focus of North Korean Corruption," *New York Times*, 13 April 2007.

6. Dick K. Nanto and Emma Chanlett-Avery, *The North Korean Economy: Leverage and Policy Analysis* (Washington, DC: CRS, 26 August 2008), 54.

7. Alexander George, *Forceful Persuasion: Coercive Diplomacy as an Alternative to War* (Washington, DC: US Institute for Peace, 1991), 5. Dr. George uses the case study method to develop a detailed theory of coercive diplomacy that identifies key variables, conditions, and strategies. For a number of useful case studies on the use of coercive diplomatic strategies, see Robert J. Art and Patrick M. Cronin, eds., *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy* (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 2003).

8. John Kerry, *The New War: The Web of Crime that Threatens America's Security* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), 15.

9. Jonathan Beaty and S. C. Gwynne, "The Dirtiest Bank of All," *Time*, 29 July 1991, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,973481,00.html>.

10. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *The BCCI Affair: A Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate*, "Executive Summary," prepared by Hon. John Kerry and Hon. Hank Brown, 102d Cong., 2d sess., Senate Print, 102-40, [http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/1992\\_rpt/bcci/](http://www.fas.org/irp/congress/1992_rpt/bcci/).

11. For an excellent overview of transnational crime as a security threat, see Roy Godson, "Transnational Crime, Corruption and Security," in *Grave New World: Security Challenges in the 21st Century*, ed. Michael E. Brown (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2003), 259-78.

12. Remarks by President Clinton to UN General Assembly, 22 October 1995, <http://clinton4.nara.gov/WH/New/other/unspeech.html>.

13. Ibid.

14. William F. Wechsler, "Follow the Money," *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 4 (July/August, 2001): 48-49.

15. Ibid., 48.

16. Peter Reuter and Edwin M. Truman, *Chasing Dirty Money: The Fight Against Money Laundering* (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 2004), 81–87.
17. Wechsler, “Follow the Money,” 49.
18. Reuter and Truman, *Chasing Dirty Money*, 6.
19. FATF members: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Gulf Cooperation Council, Hong Kong, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Russian Federation, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States.
20. *The National Money Laundering Strategy for 2000* (Washington, DC: Department of the Treasury, 2000), 58, <http://www.treasury.gov/press/releases/docs/ml2000.pdf>. The Money Laundering and Financial Crimes Strategy Act of 1998 directed the development of an annual money laundering strategy (Public Law 105-310-October 30, 1998, 112 Stat. 2941), [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=105\\_cong\\_public\\_laws&docid=f:publ310.105.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=105_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ310.105.pdf). The first *NMLS*, published in September 1999, focused on improving domestic law enforcement, enhancing regulation, strengthening partnerships with state and local governments, and promoting international cooperation.
21. See bill summary for H.R. 3886 at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d106:HR03886:@@L&summ2=m&>.
22. See bill summary for S.2972 at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d106:SN02972:@@L&summ2=m&>.
23. William F. Wechsler, “Testimony before the House Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources,” 23 June 2000, <http://www.treasury.gov/press/releases/ls732.htm>.
24. Senator John Kerry, “Introduction of S. 2972: The International Counter-Money Laundering and Foreign Act of 2000,” *Congressional Record Online*, 27 July 2000, <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/crecord/00crpgs.html>.
25. Jesse S. Morgan, “Dirty Names, Dangerous Money: Alleged Unilateralism in US Policy on Money Laundering,” *Berkeley Journal of Law* 21, Issue 3 (2003): 786–90; and Wechsler, “Follow the Money,” 55–56.
26. The FATF adopted Eight Special Recommendations on Terrorist Financing in October 2001. It added a ninth recommendation in October 2004. See Reuter and Truman, 139–48 for a discussion of the Eight Special Recommendations and US-led efforts to combat terrorism financing. The FATF 40 Recommendations as well as the Special Recommendations are available on the FATF Web site, <http://www.fatf-gafi.org>.
27. Senator John Kerry, “USA Patriot Act of 2001,” *Congressional Record Online*, 25 October 2001, S11026, <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/crecord/01crpgs.html>.
28. See the FinCEN Web site, [http://www.fincen.gov/reg\\_section311.html](http://www.fincen.gov/reg_section311.html).
29. David L. Asher, “The Impact of U.S. Policy on North Korean Illicit Activities,” Heritage Lecture 1024, *Heritage Foundation Online*, 23 May 2007, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/AsiaandthePacific/hl1024.cfm>.
30. Michael J. Mazarr, “The Long Road to Pyongyang: A Case Study in Policymaking without Direction,” *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 5 (September/October 2007): 75–94. Mazarr provides a useful overview of the Bush administration’s struggle to reconcile the desire for a regime change and a change of behavior. He argues, as do a number of other authors, that this produced an inconsistent and erratic policy vis-à-vis North Korea.
31. Yoichi Funabashi, *The Peninsula Question: A Chronicle of the Second Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2007), 412.

32. Nanto and Chanlett-Avery, "The North Korean Economy," 6–11.
33. Media Note, "North Korea—Denuclearization Action Plan" (Washington, DC: Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, 13 February 2007), <http://merln.ndu.edu/archivepdf/northkorea/state/80479.pdf>.
34. *Federal Register* 72, no. 52 (Monday, 19 March 2007): Rules and Regulations, 12732.
35. Steven R. Weisman, "How the US Turned North Korean Funds Into a Bargaining Chip," *New York Times*, 12 April 2007.
36. Ibid.
37. Press release, "Testimony of Daniel Glaser, deputy assistant secretary (Terrorist Financing and Financial Crimes) US Department of the Treasury before the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, 12 September 2006," <http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/hp93.htm>.
38. See Steven Lee Myers, "In Setback for Bush, Korea Nuclear Talks Collapse," *New York Times*, 11 December 2008, for an update on the ongoing struggle to implement the 2007 agreement. North Korea continues to resist signing a final inspection and verification plan.
39. The ideas for this analysis are drawn from Gary M. Shiffman, *Economic Instruments of National Security: Influencing Choices of Leaders* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 38–58.

## Book Reviews

***The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons since 1945*** by Nina Tannenwald. Cambridge University Press, 2008, 472 pp., \$35.00.

*The Nuclear Taboo* is the culmination of over a decade of research, analysis, and writing on the nonuse of nuclear weapons by Nina Tannenwald, an associate professor (research) at the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University. Tannenwald's interest in the topic was first generated by her experiences with the antinuclear movement. She pursued the topic through graduate school and into her academic career in political science. This book is an expanded version of her 1999 article in *International Organization* and her widely read chapter, co-authored with Richard Price, in Peter Katzenstein's highly regarded *The Culture of National Security*.

In *The Nuclear Taboo*, Tannenwald argues that rationalist cost-benefit evaluations and realist emphasis on self-interest and power do not fully account for the nonuse of nuclear weapons since 1945. She convincingly integrates constructivist theory with more conventional explanations, such as deterrence, to show how ideas about national identity, morality in warfare, legitimate use of weapons, and norms (normative expectations of appropriate behavior) have played important roles. She traces how these ideational factors helped to socially construct a self-reinforcing norm of nonuse, or a nuclear weapons taboo. Tannenwald emphasizes the "bottom up" nature of the taboo, showing how it first emerged from beliefs within the general public that exerted pressure on political leaders. These ideas were later formally institutionalized in arms control agreements. Her conclusion that the taboo has been largely "the fortuitous outcome of a successful 'muddling through' the nuclear era [rather] than a clear-eyed rational development" (p. 21) is somewhat unsettling when we think of the future of nuclear proliferation or the evolution of strategic interactions.

Tannenwald's theoretical argument, extensive archival work, and intricate accounts of how nuclear decisions were made in the US White House will be of interest to a wide audience. The book is organized around three intertwined themes: a historical account of the nonuse of nuclear weapons by the United States since 1945, the processes and factors linking rational self-interest and morality that led to the creation of the nuclear taboo, and the impact of the evolving nuclear taboo on US foreign policy. Chapter 1 describes the motivation for the study, defines and defends the use of the concept "nuclear taboo," and places the book within international relations debates on the impact of norms. Chapter 2 is the theoretical heart of the book that describes how the nuclear taboo developed, became self-reinforcing, and impacted decision making. She argues that norms influenced US nuclear warfare decision

making in at least three ways. First, norms regulate by defining limits of acceptable actions that constrain policy options and strategy. Second, norms are constitutive, meaning that they shape identities, such as the identity of a “civilized nation,” that shape policy and strategy preferences. Third, norms can function to shield complementary practices, such as the use of conventional weapons, from scrutiny.

In addition to her constructivist explanation, Tannenwald evaluates five alternatives: (1) deterrence, (2) fear of setting future precedents, (3) lack of military utility, (4) material constraints such as lack of systems, organizations, and capabilities for use, and (5) growing obsolescence of all major war, not just nuclear war. Tannenwald does not claim that the taboo is the only reason for nonuse, but that it is a necessary part of the explanation. The practice of deterrence ultimately relies upon the nuclear taboo. Methodologically, she uses case studies to trace the evolution of the taboo and to show how moral and ethical discourse, in addition to self-interested calculations and security dilemma dynamics, influenced decision making and strategy by successive US administrations. Chapters 3 through 9 are each devoted to a particular time period: Hiroshima and its immediate aftermath, the Korean War, societal pressure and domestic politics from 1953 to 1960, the Vietnam War, institutionalization through various arms-control and other formal limitations on nuclear weapons from 1960 to 1989, the 1991 Gulf War, and the post-Cold War era. The case studies are supported by extensive research in presidential archives, memoirs, interviews, and government documents. They are rich in historical detail, particularly on the decision-making processes of US presidents and their key advisors. Unfortunately, anyone interested in the Cuban missile crisis will be disappointed, as there is only a very brief mention of it.

*The Nuclear Taboo* is an excellent example of how a constructivist theoretical approach can inform our understanding of national security issues, usually seen as the domain of rationalist explanations. Tannenwald's theoretical argument and case studies skillfully link material factors (the bomb) and ideational factors (norms, beliefs, values, identities) to a material outcome (dropping or launching nuclear weapons) (p. 2). However, as a constructivist argument, the book only tells half the story: if factors can be conceived of as both ideational and material, then so can outcomes. If we think in terms of ideational outcomes, then nuclear weapons are used on a near-continual basis. That is to say, possession of nuclear weapons constitutes a collective identity between possessors of nuclear weapons and those who do not possess such weapons. This collective identity consists, in part, of mutually understood roles that affect how those who do not possess nuclear weapons behave in the presence of nuclear-armed states, and vice versa. As an analogy we might think about what it means to “use” a gun. Suppose you are walking down a dark alley when someone approaches you and pulls back his or her coat so you can see a gun in the waistband. If the person then told you to leave the alley, you (as well as most of us) would comply. The behavior occurs despite the fact that the gun was never used in the material sense of being fired.

Constructivist analyses remind us that ideational phenomena are just as relevant as material phenomena. So we should not forget that outcomes can also

be ideational; collectively held notions of power constrain and enable the behavior of the powerful as well as the powerless. Practically, we might be reminded of the lesson learned by the Indian defense minister from the 1991 Gulf War: “Don’t fight the United States unless you have nuclear weapons.” For examples, we might ponder whether the United States could have constrained the Soviets from putting missiles and nuclear warheads in Cuba if the United States did not have nuclear weapons, or how Israeli relations with neighboring countries might be different if Israel did not have nuclear weapons or if Syria did. And we might also ponder whether the US military would have lost more than 4,000 soldiers in Iraq if Iraq or Iran had had nuclear weapons.

Carol Atkinson, PhD

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***On Other War: Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counter-Insurgency Research*** by Austin Long. RAND Corporation, 2006, 102 pp., \$20.00.

Since 2003, in light of the events in Iraq and Afghanistan, several books and articles have come out on the subject of counterinsurgency (COIN), covering various themes from combating the insurgency, to memoirs, to lessons learned. One of the latest monographs published by the RAND Corporation, *On Other War*, contributes to this literature by focusing on its study of the past 50 years of COIN experience. The opening pages explain why it is essential to look into lessons of the past in view of recent operations. The author provides a brief narrative of RAND’s entry into COIN research dating back to the 1950s that expanded during the Vietnam War. RAND conducted several projects during this period ranging from studies of the morale and motivation of the Vietcong to an analysis of COIN in the Southeast Asian region. After the conflict, interest on the subject declined except for occasional interest in events in Central America. The end of the Cold War again toned down significant attention to COIN in RAND’s research agenda.

Subsequent chapters discuss in depth the analogies of lessons learned in previous COIN operations to their relevance for current actions. For a historical context, a comparison is made of the command structure of groups in Central America and Afghanistan during the ’80s and the current operations in Iraq. Two consecutive chapters deal with the development of COIN theory and its practice at RAND. The first looks into the well-known Hearts and Minds (HAM) and Coercion Theories; again historical examples were taken from the Vietnam conflict and Cold War-era analyses, such as looking into economic assistance and its intended recipients during the Vietnam War. The remainder of the segment tackles the decision making and logical reasoning of the people in line with insurgency and COIN. The latter covers insurgent organization. This particular section looks into elements of a movement, relationship with other groups, and the response to weapons fielded by COIN forces against them. A number of battles during Vietnam were also examined. Another essential factor looks into COIN organiza-



tion and the coordination and management with various government agencies in countering insurgency. The final elements in the chapter settle on the amnesty and reward program, which examines the effectiveness of the Vietnam-era Chieu Hoi program and border security programs attempted during both the Vietnam and the French-Algerian wars.

The penultimate chapter recommends applying the lessons of the past to today's events. The author distills four recommendations for improving the conduct of COIN. From organization, to the expansion of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), to Amnesty and Rewards programs, to border security in Iraq and Afghanistan, and lastly the Pacification Programs targeted at village levels, the study takes into account that lessons from previous COIN efforts have much to offer contemporary operational planners. In the amnesty and rewards section, a livelihood or cooperative stores program could be initiated to be given as a reward for those returning to the government. This particular project could also be initiated within the villages to provide jobs or increase local incomes. Such endeavors could involve an interagency task force or an international organization to provide technical support, which could also readily market the produced product. An enhancement to COIN efforts would be to recognize individual and group livelihood program accomplishments that could serve as examples or motivation for others to emulate. Full utilization of media facilities (print, radio, Internet, TV, and signpost) should also be central program enhancement features. National (infrastructure) and social developments (medical missions) are also vital factors in bringing the government to the people.

An information campaign drive could be attached to the Pacification Program to convey the government's present and future socioeconomic agendas for the country. This course of action could be an interaction point for local and national officials and the community.

*On Other War* is divided into six chapters. It is well supported by a number of photographs and a chart of a theoretical future PRT structure. A select list of RAND publications on counterinsurgency supplements the book. In conclusion, I recommend this book as a valuable addition in the library of officers at all levels—those currently involved in COIN as well as those destined to become involved in COIN at some point in their careers—specifically those at the CMO community, government officials, and historians.

**LCDR Mark R. Condono**  
*Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary*  
*Manila, Philippines*

***The State of India's Democracy***, edited by Sumit Ganguly, Larry Diamond, and Marc F. Plattner. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007, 231 pp., \$18.95.

South Asia, and India in particular, have gained strategic importance for the United States over the past decade. The 2006 *National Security Strategy* specifically states that India is now poised to “shoulder global obligations in coopera-

tion with the United States.” *The State of India’s Democracy* is the latest attempt to describe the complex inner workings of the world’s most populous democracy. Part of a series on democracy sponsored by the *Journal of Democracy*, this book is a compendium of articles by Indian and international scholars who analyze India’s democracy through the lens of politics, the state, domestic society, and the economy. It shows not only the positive aspects of Indian society and the strength of its democracy but also many of the challenges India confronts, including flawed protection of the rights of religious and ethnic minorities, poor performance of public institutions, and coercive powers of the Indian police.

The book speaks to a wide range of audiences: to casual readers who seek a more thorough understanding of India than what is provided by Tom Friedman’s *The World is Flat*, to scholars whose interests lie toward in-depth study of India’s social structure and the various institutions that feed as well as challenge that nation’s democracy, and to national security and military strategists who need to learn more about Indian society to glean lessons applicable to other developing nations. Strategists, in particular, should read this book to understand the dynamic nature of Indian society, the lessons available from understanding the development of India’s economy, and how to leverage India’s growing diplomatic clout to assist with economic development in Iraq and Afghanistan and mediation with Iran.

Sumit Ganguly’s eloquent introduction highlights that, by all accounts, India’s democracy should not have succeeded following the withdrawal of the British in 1947. India had widespread poverty, deep social divisions, and an incredibly low per capita income of \$1,000 per year, which is considered too low for economic development. However, he notes that India’s leaders have worked diligently to decrease poverty through education, with the lower castes and minorities receiving special quotas in prestigious schools and colleges. The government has also quelled some social divisions by accommodating minorities in the political process by, in some instances, redrawing state boundaries and creating new states to form linguistically homogenous states. The economic reforms launched in the mid-1990s also fuel India’s improving per capita income.

Unfortunately, as the book reveals, this democratic stability and growth, like all centrally managed endeavors, have come at a cost. For much of the past 60 years, India has been dominated by a single party—the Indian National Congress Party. This highly inclusive political body accommodates minorities and works to maintain the liberal nature of India’s democratic system. Ganguly notes that the greatest threat to the secular nature of India’s democracy now comes from Hindu chauvinism manifesting itself in large political parties and government institutions. The new political parties draw political power from the large voter base of the lower and disadvantaged castes. The book’s contributors note that recently, the Congress party has started to win elections again by relying on its ability to bring smaller parties into its fold. This has decreased some of the religious violence and is a promising sign about the compromising nature of Indian politics. Like many developing nations, India is a mixed bag of internal forces—some that push the country towards greater development and democracy and others that pull it back.

Globalization and the bold move to open up India's state-controlled economy in the last decade have spurred an unprecedented level of economic growth and development. Several articles in the book show how this economic growth has, on balance, benefitted India's democracy. Contributor Aseema Sinha notes that though the rapid economic growth has created rising inequalities, particularly the widening gap between the rich and the poor as well as the uneven economic development from state to state, the disadvantaged have funneled their frustrations into democratic institutions rather than subverting the political process. Fareed Zakaria argues exactly this point in *The Future of Freedom*, stating that as the economy of a nation develops and the middle class grows, a nation's democratic institutions are strengthened. These institutions have helped mend some of the fractures in Indian society caused by its numerous ethnic, religious, and social class divisions. These divisions are more closely related to the challenges facing Iraq and Afghanistan than the relatively homogenous nations of the West, around which many strategists and social scientists base their democracy theories. For the national security strategists, India may be a better model for nurturing democracy in developing nations than prevailing Western-oriented models.

The emergence of India as a regional and international power makes this book especially important to the national security and military strategist. India's growing economic strength, coupled with its experience in dealing with religious and ethnic minorities, should be leveraged to help with thorny international diplomatic issues. India is an incredibly diverse country, which has had to work hard to maintain cohesion despite its numerous religious minorities and ethnic groups. This innate ability to build on common interests and forge internal alliances has allowed India to project this diplomatic side of its democracy to its dealings internationally. After three wars and numerous border skirmishes, India and Pakistan are moving forward to settle differences over the disputed region of Kashmir.

A recent Congressional Research Service report noted that India also maintains strong diplomatic and economic ties to Iran, Afghanistan, Israel, and the West. It is a major funding source for schools in Afghanistan and is also involved in negotiations to build energy pipelines from Iran to India through Pakistan. India has military and economic ties to Israel and the United States. This trend to become more engaged in the international system will continue as India's economy develops and its companies pursue global investments. Aseema Sinha reports that India's annual GDP is 8 percent. The service sector in particular grew by more than 34 percent over the past two decades and is now over 50 percent of India's GDP. This sector is one of the areas that can easily look to neighboring countries and trading partners to expand further. India's formal and informal ties with Muslim nations and the West should be explored by diplomats and national policy makers, since India may be a natural arbitrator and partner to the West in many initiatives in the Middle East.

Sumit Ganguly et al. have compiled a great primer on India of significant scholarly and strategic import. India's growing role on the world economic stage is only one aspect of its power. Strategists need to look beyond the veneer of "out-

sourcing” to understand why India prospers more than most developing nations. India’s democracy, government, economy, and social systems are all intimately connected. *The State of India’s Democracy* draws out many of the connective nuances of Indian society that make India even more remarkably complex than one might have heretofore considered.

Lt Col Rizwan Ali, USAF  
National War College

***Sustaining Air Force Space Systems, A Model for the Global Positioning System***

by Don Snyder, Patrick Mills, Katherine Comanor, and Charles Robert Roll Jr.  
RAND Corporation, 2007, 66 pp., \$23.00.

This monograph uses the global positioning system (GPS) to set the criteria and develop a model for comparing the relationship of operational performance against sustainment activities. The authors describe a model which could be used to assist in risk-management decision making for space systems. This research report was sponsored by the USAF Space Command and conducted by the Resource Management Program of RAND Project Air Force. Given the requirement in many cases for prolonging operational life beyond that anticipated for many components, this pilot study and follow-on work could become more critical for efficient budgeting in the space arena.

The book is divided into two distinct sections. The first, more easily read, section explains the building blocks which make up the complete GPS network and why satellite constellations require frequent corrective positioning for station keeping. Using accuracy for the user as the benchmark figure, it then explains the various factors which can affect that accuracy. In particular the study is focused on the reliability of one subsystem of the GPS ground element: the ground antennas that transmit repositioning updates to the constellations. By modeling the three possible disruptions to transmitting repositioning data (interruptions in the communications links, unscheduled maintenance, and scheduled maintenance) over time, the study sets out to show a predictive model for reviewing the overall system.

The second element is the chapter on predictive modeling for the sustainment of the GPS ground antennas. This is the real meat and purpose of the monograph and is definitely for those who enjoy graphical analysis. It was interesting to see how adding an extra aerial to the system had minimal effect on operational reliability, yet withdrawing an aerial became a critical weakness. I found this section particularly illustrative of the different mind-set required when looking at system redundancy. In drawing conclusions, the reader is also exposed to possible future work to advance the analysis in order to provide a more detailed systemwide model.

Overall, this book, which is a quick read, will appeal to two different readers. It educates those of us who are not fully aware of the requirements of the GPS system, while at the same time providing much more technical data to those who

are interested in maintaining space systems and are looking for a model to assist them in that task.

Gp Capt Dave Cass, RAF  
*Headquarters Air Force, Checkmate*

***A Contract with the Earth*** by Newt Gingrich and Terry L. Maple, foreword by E. O. Wilson. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007, 207 pp., \$20.00.

In response to Al Gore's recent onslaught of all things environmental (his documentary "An Inconvenient Truth," his book *The Assault on Reason*, his "Climate in Crisis" concert, and his Nobel Prize), former Republican Speaker of the House and current conservative commentator Newt Gingrich has recycled his chief political accomplishment, the Contract with America, and given it a slight environmental twist. Gingrich co-authored this book with Dr. Terry L. Maple, a professor of conservation and behavior at the Georgia Institute of Technology and president/CEO of the Palm Beach Zoo.

This political monograph has 10 chapters comprising three main parts. Each chapter ends with talking-point summaries. The first part contains a foreword, a preface, a questionnaire entitled "Are You a Mainstream Environmentalist?" and the first two chapters, which present a short explanation of the "Contract with the Earth." The second part, consisting of two chapters, is an overview of what the authors believe are the most pressing environmental problems: wildlife conservation and foreign oil dependency. The third part includes chapters 5–10, an epilogue, and additional back matter outlining their reasoning behind the contract with Earth. The core concept is "entrepreneurial environmentalism," which asserts that environmental concerns should be addressed, not through government action, but through private-public partnerships between environmental interest groups and corporations.

The authors emphasize the need to protect wildlife diversity and to increase energy efficiency; both are admirable environmental goals. However, there is virtually no meaningful discussion of other critical environmental issues, such as hazardous waste management, environmental cleanup, water conservation, air pollution, soil protection, nuclear waste disposal, or climate change. In fact, there is no mention of climate change in the first 38 pages of the book. It is not until the epilogue that the authors admit that the climate is changing and further study is warranted. They do stress the importance of protecting wildlife, but how can wildlife be adequately protected without also addressing climate change? For instance, how can fish in the ocean be protected if climate change ends up bleaching the world's coral reefs?

In respect to the environment, climate change is one of the most critical issues and needs to be thoroughly addressed, not avoided. Bob Woodward's best-selling book, *State of Denial*, reports that Gingrich told then-secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld (who, at the time, was bragging about the results of the 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review*) that "None of that matters. . . . Only Iraq matters. . . . [It is] the

most important country in the world that all of American foreign policy hinges on” (Woodward, 2006, 434). Later, Gingrich was proven correct when the Republicans lost control of both the House and the Senate in the 2006 midterm elections, mainly over dissatisfaction with the Iraq war. Gingrich would do well to listen to his own advice—paraphrasing, “When it comes to the environment, none of the rest matters as much . . . global climate change matters . . . it is the most important environmental issue in the world today. The future of US environmental policy hinges on how it responds to climate change.”

The authors suggest that the only environmental regulation that did any good was the Endangered Species Act, passed by President Nixon. There was no mention of the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, or the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act. These are important governmental regulations that led to the cleanup of our nation’s air, water, and land. The authors also suggest that meaningful environmental progress can only be achieved through entrepreneurial environmentalism, not governmental regulation. This criticism leads to another major flaw. They state that it is important for the American people to concentrate on US environmental successes. However, in direct contradiction to earlier claims that real environmental success can only be achieved through entrepreneurial environmentalism, pretty much all the nationwide successes that they point out have been achieved through federal government regulation—lead-free gas, elimination of CFCs, and the preservation of wildlife through the Endangered Species Act.

Finally, the authors’ recommendations could be more aggressive, given the importance of a healthy and functioning environment. For example, when it comes to climate change, they recommend more study on the subject, because they do not strongly connect climate change with the burning of fossil fuels. They do recommend reducing oil consumption, but as a way of reducing dependency on foreign oil, not to prevent global warming. Other recommendations—such as letting hybrid car owners have free parking, drive in HOV lanes, and receive vehicle registration discounts (p. 95)—are equally tentative. A more serious approach should include more meaningful recommendations, such as a \$7,000 tax credit for buying a hybrid. This would not only cover the increased cost of buying a hybrid (usually \$5,000–\$6,000 more than a comparable nonhybrid vehicle), but would also provide an incentive for people to become more energy efficient, help reduce dependency on foreign oil, and help reduce greenhouse gases. In the end, the authors have engaged one of the most important strategic issues the United States and the world will face in the coming century. However, *A Contract with the Earth* falls short of its potential to address environmental security in a comprehensive fashion, mainly because it fails to adequately address the issue of global climate change.

**Lt Col Thomas Williams, USAF**  
*Air Command and Staff College*

# Letter to Editor

## *The Contact Sport Senior Leaders Must Play (Spring 2009)*

Maj Gen Charles J. Dunlap Jr. is to be commended for his recent editorial in *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, which urged Airmen—and especially senior Air Force officers—to contribute more regularly to the public debate on national security issues and defense policy. As General Dunlap argued, too often the “air-minded” perspective has been missing from professional journals and other important public venues. Why has this been the case, and what can be done to remedy the deficit?

While, ironically, the Air Force prides itself on being the service with a truly global perspective, too often Airmen have interpreted that narrowly in terms of platforms and capabilities and not in terms of a wider appreciation for global security issues and how airpower can best be employed by civilian policy makers. Of course, this is not entirely surprising in light of the technological foundations of airpower (and also space and cyberspace power). Nor is it unexpected when considering that the USAF was born in tandem with the belief that airpower alone could win wars, along with the perception that too often it has been civilian policy makers who have stymied airpower’s promise—witness the enduring bitterness over the use of airpower during the Vietnam War, or even during NATO air operations in Kosovo.

From my viewpoint as past student and current educator within Air University’s graduate-level professional military education (PME) system, a key contributing factor is that we have not been educating our officers soon enough, or broadly enough, about the US national security policy-making system in all its complexity and messy political reality. Of course, realistically, faculty can only accomplish so much within the PME system, with its many competing joint and service requirements. A partial remedy for that is to send more of our brightest officers to prestigious civilian universities early in their careers to receive graduate degrees in such disciplines as political science, international relations, area studies, and history. Just as we believe that the networking and cross-dialogue that occurs at PME schools is a key benefit for our officers, so too is the networking with potential civilian policy makers and the exposure to diverse civilian perspectives that they would receive at universities. In that setting our future leaders can nurture broader habits of thinking, as they will doubtless be forced out of their comfort zone at times and may even be placed on the defensive. That is all to the good, as nothing is guaranteed to stimulate creative thinking more than a policy “dogfight” with a worthy adversary. In this way we can help ensure that some of our key officers are targeted early to articulate airpower successfully in the national security arena.

A further important factor contributing to the lack of effective public advocacy by senior USAF leaders is that many of our officers do not seem to understand how to provide professional military advice in line with appropriate civil-military relations. This was brought home most forcefully in the summer of 2008 when the secretary of defense relieved both the secretary and the chief of staff of the Air Force of their

duties. While certainly the nuclear stewardship issue was the precipitating cause, many commentators have pointed to a perception within Congress and other policy-making circles that the Air Force refused (or was unable) to read the political signs correctly when it continued to insist on acquiring larger numbers of F-22s and did not fully grasp the displeasure felt over such USAF acquisition processes as a new tanker.

From my perspective as a faculty member, at least part of recent Air Force problems lies in the fact that we are not systematically educating our officers to understand the boundaries of their advisory roles in the civil-military relationship and how that enters into national security policy debates. This is a very complex and easily politicized arena, and it is important that we challenge our future leaders to prepare to operate within it from an early stage. Yet here is where I must respectfully disagree with General Dunlap's use of Gen Colin Powell and Gen David Petraeus as proper exemplars for military officers engaging in public debate on defense policy. General Dunlap points to specific instances where both of these general officers published opinion pieces in influential newspapers, which turned out to be controversial, or even political, as they intruded into what was perceived to be the civilian policy makers' spheres. While General Dunlap rightly applauds the ensuing policy discussions, he also emphasizes that both officers' careers were not negatively affected, and that then-Lieutenant General Petraeus was afterwards promoted. Perhaps General Dunlap did not mean to give the impression that he was sanctioning, or even applauding, a model whereby general officers challenge (Powell) or actively endorse (Petraeus) the civilian administration's national security policy—because those actions did not harm their careers—but the interpretation is difficult to avoid. While spirited debate benefits our understanding of key issues, air leaders must ultimately be careful not to affect civil-military relations in detrimental ways. In closing, I note this example primarily to illustrate the complexity of national security and defense policy making and why the USAF needs to place much more emphasis on preparing officers from an early age to participate actively, and effectively, in providing an “air-minded” approach.

**Kathleen A. Mahoney-Norris, PhD**

Col, USAFR, Retired  
*Air Command and Staff College*

### ***Response to Letter to Editor***

I very much appreciate Professor Mahoney-Norris' feedback on my essay, to include her well-reasoned critique of my inclusion of Generals Powell and Petraeus as examples of professional writing efforts.

Her point is an extremely important one: that is, the civil-military implications of senior officer writing. Obviously, my essay was not oriented towards that issue, but it certainly is a topic worthy of further discussion.

I addressed it in part in an essay entitled “Voices from the Stars? America's Generals and Public Debates,” found in the November 2006 ABA *National Security Law Report*



*Letter to Editor*

(accessible at [http://www.abanet.org/natsecurity/nslr/2006/NSL\\_Report\\_2006\\_11.pdf](http://www.abanet.org/natsecurity/nslr/2006/NSL_Report_2006_11.pdf), pp. 8–11).

I want to thank the *SSQ* staff for publishing not just my essay but Professor Mahoney-Norris' critique as well. I firmly believe that such dialogue is exactly the kind of exchange the *SSQ* was designed to generate in order for the Air Force to advance its intellectual development.

**Maj Gen Charles J. Dunlap Jr., USAF**  
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